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PLAIN FACTS

FOR

FAIR MINDS

AN APPEAL TO CANDOR
AND COMMON SENSE

BY

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PREFACE.

THIS book has been written, not with the view of controversy, but of simply stating the Catholic doctrine. In these days there seems little need of controversy on our part with the majority, at least, of Protestant Christians; for their belief mainly consists of remnants of our own, and so far are we from objecting to it, that we thank God that they have preserved such important parts of His revelation as are the dogmas of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption of man by the great Sacrifice of the Cross. Some tenets they have, no doubt, which we cannot approve, but these are generally regarded as non-essential, and are losing their hold even in the churches which nominally maintain them. What they prize, we also teach.

They, however, are not tired of controversy. The very essence of Protestantism is in protesting against the Catholic Church.

Preface.

its beginning these protests were based on really divergent beliefs; but now they are principally directed against what has no real existence. Those who make them are, for the most part, as we Catholics well know, simply fighting a man of straw; a creature of their own imagination, and of the false traditions received from their ancestors. The only way in which their objections can be answered, except by such examples of virtue as we can show, is by plain statements of what our belief really is. If they can be induced to listen to us, and to believe that we actually teach and hold what we say we do, as every instinct of fairness and candor and honesty would compel them to do in any other question; if they will take our doctrine from our own account of it, not from those of others prejudiced like themselves, we need not fear the outcome.

There seems at the present time to be a better disposition than formerly on the part of those outside to listen to our own statements about our faith, rather than to those coming from second-hand sources. What is said in these pages has, of course, been said

Preface.

before; but perhaps it may fall now on more willing ears and more candid minds.

In these pages the truth of the Christian religion is practically assumed. This book is not intended to prove the existence of God, or the fact of a Divine revelation to the atheist, the agnostic, or the infidel. Neither is it directed against such as may believe in some revelation additional or supplementary to that given to us by Christ; nor does it deal with every theory regarding the Church which may be held—as, for example, that of the Anglicans. It is addressed principally to what are commonly called Bible Christians, who form the majority of our Protestant population, in order to show them that the Catholic religion, while thoroughly in accordance with Scripture and based on it, also agrees with reason and common sense, and has nothing to fear from the discoveries or legitimate conclusions of science; that having the historical presumption in its favor, it also in every other way satisfies the demands of the intellect, as well as the needs of the soul. And to show the reasonableness of what is really

Preface.

the only thoroughly reasonable form of Christianity may not be altogether unprofitable even to others also, of whatever kind their belief or unbelief may be.

It may be added, in further explanation of the plan of the work, that though, as has been said, it is not intended as an attack on distinctively Protestant doctrines, it has seemed best at the outset to compare the Catholic idea of Christianity with the usual Protestant theory basing religion on the Bible alone. The creed of the Catholic Church is then set forth point by point; the order here followed is that of the profession of faith made by converts, each point of this profession being separately considered, and the common objections and misconceptions dealt with. In conclusion, other charges against the Church not suggested by the profession, but often made by those who do not know us, are discussed and shown also to rest on prejudice or misunderstanding.

CONTENTS.

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I.—INTRODUCTORY, ...	I
II.—BIBLE PROTESTANTISM, ...	16
III.—THE CATHOLIC IDEA OF CHRISTIAN- ITY, ...	29
IV.—THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE, .	36
V.—THE CATHOLIC IDEA OF THE BIBLE,	50
VI.—THE PRINCIPAL POINTS OF CATHOLIC FAITH, ...	59
VII.—THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, . .	74
VIII.—THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, .	82
IX.—THE HOLY EUCHARIST, ...	87
X.—THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS, ...	101
XI.—PURGATORY, ...	111
XII.—THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD; EVERLASTING LIFE, ...	132
XIII.—THE PRIMACY OF THE ROMAN PON- TIF, ...	143
XIV.—CATHOLIC EDUCATION, ...	151
XV.—THE VENERATION OF THE SAINTS, AND OF THEIR IMAGES, ...	162
XVI.—THE REMAINDER OF THE PROFES- SION, ...	185
XVII.—THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH, .	198
XVIII.—INDULGENCES AND DISPENSATIONS,	221

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
XIX.—CONFESSION, ...	233
XX.—THE CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY, .	244
XXI.—MODERN MIRACLES, ...	251
XXII.—SUPERSTITION, ...	268
XXIII.—THE CHURCH OPPOSED TO SCIENCE,	274
XXIV.—THE CHURCH OPPOSED TO LIBERTY OF THOUGHT, ...	285
XXV.—THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OPPOSED TO FREE INSTITUTIONS, ...	298
XXVI.—PERSECUTION, ...	307
XXVII.—THE CATHOLIC LAWS OF MARRIAGE,	321
XXVIII.—USE OF THE LATIN LANGUAGE, .	331
XXIX.—CEREMONIES AND RITES OF THE CHURCH, ...	338
XXX.—THE GOOD AND THE BAD IN THE . CHURCH, ...	343
XXXI.—CONCLUSION, ...	352

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

I ADDRESS these pages in general to those who love the truth, and who wish to know it; more specially to those who believe, as common sense must require us to believe, that the most important part of all truth is that which relates to man's duty here, and his destiny hereafter; but particularly to those who are convinced that this last, religious truth, or the true religion, is to be found somewhere or other in what is known as Christianity; or in other words, that the religion founded by Christ contains all that man can know on these most important matters.

Some do not believe that anything can be known about these matters except what the light of nature shows us; with such, of course, discussion is quite possible, but I do not propose to enter on it. Many others believe that the true, or at any rate the truest religion is not that of Christ, but some other; but though there are plenty of this sort in the world, there are not so many here; few Americans are Mohammedans, or even Buddhists; so I pass them by, and turn

to the multitude, who still are, by inheritance and by profession, Christians.

And yet, after all, considerations presented on this basis may not be altogether beside the mark for those who do not stand on it. For the reason why they refuse to stand on it may well be that the Christian creed seems to them unreasonable and impossible; but that may be simply because their knowledge of it is very incomplete; because they have known it as it has been handed down to them from their fathers, but not as it has been believed by the great majority of those who, from the time of Christ, have lived and died in it.

It may be well, then, even for those who have rejected Christianity, *as they have understood it*, to examine if they have been right or thoroughly reasonable in so doing.

Would it be reasonable or fair to reject the whole science of medicine because you have concluded that some form of it which you have studied is a mistake? Let us, then, not reject Christianity for good and all until we are sure we know all about it; and certainly not if we are quite ignorant or doubtful about what the great mass of Christians hold.

There are vast numbers—you are perhaps one yourself—who are in just this ignorance or doubt. It is simply astonishing that there should be two hundred millions of people hold-

ing one faith, and spread through all parts of the world, and yet that their neighbors, friends, or even relatives, with whom so much of their life is spent, should be in such ignorance of what that faith is, or have such false ideas about it. Especially as these two hundred millions do not form a secret society, with secret meetings, signs, and passwords; no, everything that they hold and teach is open and above-board; they are not Freemasons, they are simply Catholics.

It was so, however, from the beginning; we were accused of worshipping an ass's head, and of slaughtering infants; but then there was more excuse for such calumnies, for there was, there had to be, some secrecy in our meetings then; but now there is very little; every one is welcome to every religious meeting of Catholics, except to that between priest and penitent in the confessional; you yourself would not want strangers, or indeed any third party, at that.

But I do not wish to blame any one for being thus ignorant, if he will only admit that perhaps he is so; for I should have to blame myself; having been once as ignorant myself, and yet fancying I knew it all. But that was some time ago.

Well now, we will come back to the line on

which we started. We will suppose that you are a Christian, or at least would like to be so if you could see your way to it without giving up your reason or your moral sense, or going through some great excitement, which you feel you cannot work yourself up to.

And here let me say a word to dispel a delusion which has become quite popular of late. It is that religion is a matter of emotion or excitement ; that there is some incompatibility between it and strict logic ; that a religious man, and especially a clergyman, must be a man of feeling, rather than of solid hard-headed fact. That religion, in short, is a sentiment rather than a science ; that it is fit for women and children, and does them a great deal of good ; and would no doubt do a man good too, if he could only bend his gigantic intellect to it.

Now, this idea would be simply amusing to any one who knows anything about the Catholic religion, if it were not a dangerous one, and therefore liable to make one sigh as well as smile. In the first place, the part of it relating to women is rather a bold assumption which perhaps we cannot hold to much longer ; I have a suspicion that perhaps women have more sense than some men imagine, and that we had better not be too confident that we are so much more clever than they, even in an argument.

But let that go. The amusing part is the

utter misconception of what religion really is. True, it *is* a matter of emotion ; and of sentiment, if you choose to call it so. And it would not be good for anything if it were not. A religion which was simply a set of mathematical formulas might appeal to a man's brain, but it would not change his life.

But the emotion of true religion must rest on a solid basis of truth, fact, and reason. The true religion, at bottom, is not imagination, but knowledge ; and knowledge, not of one fact or another, isolated or disjointed, but logically connected and thoroughly consistent ; with no paradoxes or absurdities in it ; knowledge, in short, of the kind that is properly called science. It is as truly a science as any one of the excellent branches of knowledge which are so named ; different, however, to some extent from most of them in the way it is developed ; and from all of them, in being of all the most important.

If you ask seriously, why, if this is the case, women and children take more to religion than men?—I am afraid the true reason is that religion has rather an intimate connection with morality, and that women and children, as things are now, take more kindly to that. A life of solid virtue is the best preparation for religious truth ; but still, every one can receive **it**, if only he will ; and a man if he is virtuous,

is apt to be very solidly so. Virtue, by the way, really means, in the Latin from which it is taken, manliness; it would be well for all men to think of that.

Try, then, to free yourself from this idea, rather prevalent at present, that reason and religion do not go together; or what comes to about the same thing, that they are two separate apartments of the mind, and that you must step out of one before going into the other. Indeed, is this idea, in itself, reasonable? You know that both reason and religion are worth having; indeed the first is obviously indispensable, and the second, you must at least acknowledge, has done and is doing a great deal of good, and you cannot shake off the respect you have for it when it seems to be genuine. You feel that at any rate there is some truth about it; and if you would think a little harder, you would see that what there is true about it cannot be inconsistent with reason, for two truths cannot be inconsistent. It cannot be necessary to abandon one before taking up the other.

I say; you feel that there must be some truth about religion; and I use the word "truth" in its strict sense, as meaning a correct statement of facts. Perhaps you deny this. But you must at least admit that every religion rests on some statements which it holds to be true; some dogmas, as such statements in the matter

of religion are properly called. It is merely nonsense to talk about a religion without any dogmas. The very emotion which you perhaps think the principal part of religion must rest on them. One can't get excited or deeply moved about nothing. Even a lunatic is joyful or melancholy about something ; something which he thinks is a fact, though we may see clearly that he is all wrong about it.

Take away the dogmas of any religion, and there is nothing left of it. Excitement and emotion may be all very well ; but there must be something to get excited and emotional about.

Excitement and emotion, then, rest on some supposed fact. I said just now that they may be all very well ; but they are not very well, indeed, they are not well at all in the long run, if the supposed fact is only a supposed one. They are really only a sort of lunacy, and more or less dangerous.

You have no respect for lunacy, but you have for the Christian religion ; and generally speaking, you do not regard it as dangerous, but rather good for society. You are a Christian, or you would like to be so if you could see your way to it ; but surely you do not call yourself a lunatic, or want to be one.

What is the reason ? It is that you have sense enough to see not only that the emotion

of the Christian religion, which you know tends to virtue and happiness, and which you yourself may have felt, must and does rest on some fact or facts supposed to be true, but also that you are pretty sure that this supposition is not altogether wrong.

Here you are, then, right face to face with a question which you ought not to trifle with. Five minutes' thought will bring you, and must, it would seem, bring any man of ordinarily clear head, up to it. But most men seem to go no farther.

The question is, how much of the Christian religion is true? Some of it must be true; but how much? Some of its dogmas must be correct; which are they?

Mind, as I said at the beginning, I am not talking to Buddhists or Mohammedans; nor to absolute atheists, if such persons there be, nor to universal sceptics; but to those who call themselves Christians, or would like to do so.

Now, if the Christian religion, or anything calling itself so, undertakes to teach you that two and two make five, of course you can't accept that. We can't dethrone reason to make way for religion, or for anything else. Or if it should teach you that the world was made in six days of twenty-four hours each, I can certainly see that you may find that quite hard to believe. Of course that might be so; I take

for granted that you believe in God, and if you do believe in Him, and therefore in His omnipotence, you must see that He could make all these formations on the earth, which seem to have been the growth of time, in six days, or in six minutes, or in six seconds; but still, such action on His part would seem like a trick played to deceive us, and I can readily see how you would rather look somewhere else for the truth.

Now, perhaps you think that the Christian religion does require beliefs of you which are contrary to reason, or to well-ascertained fact. But if you do, this is just where I blame you. Why don't you examine a little or even a good deal more, and not conclude that you know all about it?

But you say, where shall I examine? where shall I begin? The Christian religion is split up into so many denominations, and teaches so many different things, even irreconcilable with each other, that I don't know what I am to look at first.

Well, of course if you have been brought up in any particular one of these denominations, it is quite natural that you should examine first into that. But if you have done so, and have found the result unsatisfactory; or if you want to approach the subject, as it were, from the out-

side, it seems more natural that you should now look first at what the majority of Christians hold; at any rate, that you should not make up your mind without doing this; that you should not, as I said at the start, close the subject because you cannot accept what some comparatively small number believe, and conclude that the faith of the great remainder is substantially the same, or, at any rate, equally untenable.

It seems natural, too, to look, and to look first, into the belief of that great body of believers which has, in its organization and outward form at least, come down from the first days of the Christian religion itself; which goes by the name of no human founder or reformer. Of course this great body, this parent stock of Christianity, may have corrupted or changed the faith which Christ gave it in the beginning; may have introduced something false or immoral, or at any rate merely human, into that faith; may have usurped powers which do not belong to it; may have done something, in short, which it was right to protest against, and have acted in such a way that the only effectual protest was to abandon it, and start in a manner afresh. But it is not reasonable to take for granted that it did so. The burden of proof rather rests on those who claim that such was the case.

And it is not quite fair to take their own

accounts of the reasons which led them to separate; of the doctrines which the Catholic Church taught, and still teaches, which they say they could not swallow. Better and fairer to find out if they might not have been mistaken, to say the least. When a son leaves his father's house after some quarrel, you don't simply take his word about the quarrel; it is only fair to see what account the father will give of it. Indeed, generally the presumption is in his favor.

Do not, then, believe implicitly all that you have been accustomed to hear about the corruptions, errors, idolatries, etc., of the old and original Christian Church. I do not blame you much if you have done so hitherto; the false, and to Catholics really absurd, current notions about our faith have been held and circulated so constantly among Protestants that it can hardly be a matter of surprise that most non-Catholics take them for granted.

All I ask of you is to admit that the question may have two sides to it. The difficulty is that most Englishmen and Americans, in making up their minds as to whether they can be Christians, bar off the Catholic Church at the start from their inquiry. They take for granted that she is wrong; they feel as sure of this as they do that the earth goes round the sun, not the sun round the earth. They think both these

matters were settled three hundred years ago.

“What!” they will say, “be a Catholic? Why, you might as well go in for astrology, or hold that everything is made up of the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water. Why, the thing is exploded; it is a relic of the dark ages; it is just a superstition which no intelligent man can hang on to. It is a wonder that it has such a hold in this glorious nineteenth (and almost twentieth) century.”

All they will admit is, that this superstition may be of some use to poor ignorant people, who are too brutish or stupid to accept anything better; the consolation they give themselves when some friend of theirs does embrace this old and foolish religion, and perhaps even becomes a priest, to teach it to others, is, “Well, after all, you will be able to do some good to those poor people whom we cannot get hold of.”

How often do we hear such things said, even to our face! But in spite of this seeming confidence of superiority, there is one thing that surprises them, and that they do not like to talk about; and that is, that it is rather the educated and intelligent ones among them that become Catholics, whereas it is among the poorer and more ignorant among us that they find ones of whom they get hold. It looks as if

the Catholic faith were more attractive to intelligent people than the Protestant one; or rather, it would look so if that were not, of course, too impossible an idea to be entertained.

Another thing, too, seems a little strange: that some inducement in the way of material aid or social position seems usually required to make a Catholic abandon his faith; whereas the Protestant who becomes a Catholic has, as a rule, to sacrifice something for his convictions. It looks, you see, as if the convictions were stronger one way than the other.

Of course it may be said in explanation of the first of these two curious facts, by those who are willing to admit them as facts, that the intelligent Protestants who become Catholics are what are known at the present day as "cranks"; that they are not people of plain common sense, but students who have puzzled themselves by reasoning, or fanciful persons whose imagination has been excited. This was what Festus said to St. Paul (Acts xxvi. 24): "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." Paul, however, has generally been accepted, even by those who are not Christians, as a man of good sound intellect, to say the least. And converts to Catholicity generally, even in our times, manage to keep out of the asylum, in spite of their friends' predictions to the contrary.

To the second, it will be urged that Catholics must gain and Protestants lose by a change, because Protestants are as a whole better off, financially and socially, than Catholics. This is true; but still it does not explain why the convert to the Catholic Church should make the sacrifice which he does, or why Protestants, having presumably the truth, and certainly the money in their possession, should have such unsatisfactory results in their apostolate among well-instructed Catholics.

Now, all I would ask is that you would, just for a moment, admit that there may be some good solid reasons which have influenced the many quite intellectual and sensible Protestants who have become Catholics to make the change, in spite of the sacrifice which it involved.

And I may add, that it may be worth while even for those who have almost lost faith in Christianity, as being out of harmony with reason, to see if there is not a chance that something still remains to be said on the other side; to inquire, before giving up altogether, whether there be not a form of Christianity about which they know little or nothing, though they have always supposed it to be quite irrational and inadmissible, which after all may be not only reasonable in itself, but also in accordance with

all the progress of the age, and all the discoveries of modern science.

It is to this form of Christianity, accepted as the true one by the great mass of those who call themselves Christians, and understood well by them, though a mystery to you, that I propose very shortly to invite your attention. Let us not only admit that it may be true, but see just what it is, and if there is any good reason why it should not be true.

But first let us find out what is the inherent weakness of the Christian systems to which you have been accustomed ; why it is that they cannot reasonably command your assent, as being based on an unreasonable assumption.

CHAPTER II.

BIBLE PROTESTANTISM.

WHAT is the assumption of which I have just spoken, which I say is the cause of the weakness of Christianity as generally understood by Englishmen and Americans, and which to some extent justifies them in thinking, as I have said many do think, that religion is a matter of the heart, not of the head; that it commends itself to our sentiments, but not to our rational nature?

It is that the Bible is the sole foundation on which the Christian religion must rest; not only that it is the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, but that nothing else is the word of God.

Before proceeding farther, I would ask you to observe the precise point here noted. It is not that the Bible is an inspired book, and the only inspired book recognized by Christians; for in that the Catholic Church agrees with Protestants, except that she recognizes as belonging to the Bible a few books which are also known and read by Protestants, which though sometimes given in their Bibles, and used by them in their churches, are considered of doubtful or of

merely human authority. So we cannot complain of their considering the Bible as God's Word; for all that they recognize as such, we also recognize in like manner.

It is true that there is a certain unreasonableness, which I shall speak of shortly, in Protestants maintaining that just these writings are inspired which they have selected for their Bible; in their feeling sure that every one of them is inspired from beginning to end, and that no other writing is. Catholics have a reason for confidence in their Bible, as will appear later on; but Protestants have none except the general acceptance of these writings by Christians, unless they fall back on the proof which we employ; but to do so would remove the whole basis of Protestantism itself, as will be seen when we come to speak of that proof.

But still belief in the Bible is not in itself a fault in Protestants; on the contrary, though it is somewhat illogical in them, we should and do thank God that they have retained it; and we wish it to be distinctly understood that Catholics have the same belief in and reverence for it that they have, and even more, as based on a more sufficient reason. We, even more than they, regard it as the Word of God, inspired by Him, and of conclusive authority in matters of religion. Our sermons, like those of Protestants, are founded, as a rule, on its text, and de-

voted to an explanation of its meaning. Our people are recommended to read it with the reverent and careful attention which so holy a book requires and deserves.

That the Bible is, then, a foundation, and a great and certain foundation, of the Christian religion is not the assumption which is the principal weakness of Protestantism; though in a sense, as being with them an unreasonable assumption, it is a weakness too. But after all, a belief, even though not well or logically established in a man's mind, is good if it be really true; nothing false or ruinous is going to come from it; on the other hand, it has in itself the germs of strength and life.

This, then, is not the dangerous assumption which has split Protestantism into so many sects, and made it incapable of commanding the rational assent of man. It is not the belief that the Bible is a sure foundation for the Christian religion that has done the harm; no, it is the belief that it is its *sole* foundation.

This belief is absolutely unreasonable; for it is either demonstrably false, or destructive of Christianity itself. Taken in the sense that it is the only foundation Christianity ever had, it is clearly false. In the sense that it is the only one now remaining, the foundation it gives is obviously inadequate; Christianity becomes something which once existed, but which has passed

into oblivion ; it is as hopeless for us to acquire a sufficient knowledge of it as it would be to know thoroughly the manners and customs of the ancient Assyrians. We cannot tell whether some parts of our religion have not perished, quite as important and 'essential as those which the Bible contains. Practically, then, it is destroyed ; it exists simply as a wreck.

Let us examine these two statements, and see if they are not correct. The first one is, that the Bible cannot have been the only foundation that ever existed for Christianity.)

This is, we may say, self-evident ; that is, it requires only the most elementary knowledge of history to make it clear to any one. At the time when the apostles set out to preach the gospel, and convert the world, the Old Testament was the only part of the Bible that had been written. But evidently it was not the Old Testament which they preached, though they certainly used it to confirm their preaching, in very much the same way, it may be remarked, that the Catholic Church uses the whole Bible to-day.

No ; the bulk of their preaching was their own personal testimony to the great revelation which had been committed to their care. They spoke, as SS. Peter and John said (Acts iv. 20), the things which they had seen and heard ; as St. John says more explicitly

(I. John i. 3), "That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you." They had no need of written documents to remind them of these wonderful events, which, even had they tried, they could not forget.

And it was on their personal testimony, supported by the miracles which they worked, and which made it evident that the Holy Ghost was speaking by their lips, that their converts, the first Christians, believed in Christ. They read no Bible ; they needed none.

After a while, one by one, the books of the New Testament were written by six of the apostles, Peter, Paul, Matthew, John, James, and Jude, and by two of their companions, Mark and Luke. The four Gospels were written to put in a permanent form the principal events of our Lord's life and death, to give an authentic record of it for posterity, and also for the use of those who, even in the times of the apostles themselves, might have occasion to instruct others in it, and who had not perhaps the advantage of being eye-witnesses of what they had to tell, and at any rate not the special Divine assistance promised to the apostles themselves.

But these Gospels were necessarily incomplete accounts of the great matter of which they treated ; St. John himself says, in the close of his, that "there are also many other things

that Jesus did," and to show that he does not mean merely the things narrated by the other evangelists, but not by himself, he adds, that if all were written, the world could not contain the books.

It is impossible, of course, to take these words literally; but still they mean a great deal. And let it not be said now, that these other things omitted by the evangelists were unimportant; St. John evidently is not speaking of such things as walking, eating, or drinking, but of miracles which our Saviour worked, or instructions which He gave. Indeed, we do not need St. John to tell us that our Lord must have said much more to His disciples than is recorded in these short Gospels, and especially in the time between His resurrection and ascension, when he was, as St. Luke tells us (Acts i. 3), "for forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God."

The other books of the New Testament, with the exception of the Acts, which is as it were a continuation of the Gospels, but in a certain way still more incomplete, being principally occupied with the acts and words of only one of the apostles, and of the revelation of St. John, which we can hardly use confidently on account of its mysterious nature, are epistles written from time to time, evidently principally

to Christians, and therefore intended not so much to teach the world Christian truth as to instruct Christians more fully, or to remind them of what they had already been told.

It is, then, perfectly clear that the apostles did not take the New Testament as the ground of their instructions. It would have been absurd for them to use each other's epistles as the basis of their preaching; the Gospels were no doubt more frequently appealed to as time went on. But substantially it is plain that Christianity went on during the first century with comparatively little appeal to the Bible, and with little need to use it. And it could not have been used as a whole, and therefore, according to Protestant ideas, Christianity must have labored under great difficulties until the end of the first century; for the Bible was not completed till about that time. I trust, then, that it is clear that this book, holy and precious as it undoubtedly is, was not the principal foundation of Christianity in the early Christian times.

Let us now see whether the view can be held that it is the only foundation on which we can safely rest our religion now.

The Protestant theory is that the pure Christian truth, as held in the days when the Bible was written, was gradually corrupted and obscured by human additions and interpretations; and that the only way to get rid of these

is to sweep everything else away at one stroke, and depend on the Bible alone.

Now, it must be respectfully submitted that this theory is unsatisfactory. For, granting that the Bible as we have it is a faithful record, so far as it goes, of the actions and teaching of our Lord and of His apostles, and that the picture which it presents of primitive Christianity is, so far as that picture is clear and certain, a true one; nevertheless it is plain that this record and this picture are far from being as complete or as clear as they should be. That the text of the Bible is *not* clear and conclusive on many points of doctrine on which it does treat, is sufficiently proved by the very discrepancies of those who attempt to deduce doctrine from it without any other aid; that it is not complete is equally manifest. As has been said, there are great gaps in its account, notably its almost entire silence on the instructions given by our Lord during the time of His risen life on earth; and it is an absolutely gratuitous and unwarrantable assumption to take for granted that the matters which it omits were of no importance. Nowhere is it said in the Bible that such is the case. Some, it is true, imagine that St. John means to say this, where in the close of his revelation—which is also, as we have it, the close of the Bible itself—“if any man shall add to these things, God

shall add unto him the plagues written in this book." But it hardly needs to be remarked that St. John speaks here of the prophecies contained in this particular book of revelation which he had written ; for the Bible itself was not collected into one book at the time at which he was writing.

We have, then, no guarantee that there are not important matters of Christian faith which are not to be found in the Bible at all. We may indeed say that the points accepted by the Catholic Church are inconsistent with or even contrary to the Bible ; but that does not help us. That others have added something erroneous does not show that there was nothing true and important which should have been added.

It does not get us out of the difficulty that our Bible record is fragmentary. If we use it alone, we are in the same position as those would be who should try to construct a complete Roman history simply out of the books of Livy or Tacitus, reliable as these books might be. If we act honestly, we must confess that we have no certainty, if we proceed on these lines, that we have the whole Christian faith or can ever obtain it ; it is something which the apostles had, but which has, perhaps, now to a great extent been lost ; we have some pieces of it, but not with any certainty the whole. It is, as has been said, merely a wreck which has

come down to us. Science, it is true, may by means of analogies, and the general plan of animal construction, fill up a whole skeleton from a few bones ; but we cannot do that with a thing so unique as a Divine revelation.

But, it may be argued, half a loaf is better than no bread. True ; but that only half a loaf in this case should be left us, that we know less of the Christian faith than the first Christians did, would imply an imperfection, a partial failure in the work of God ; it would mean that He undertook to make a revelation to the world, and failed to take the means necessary to perpetuate it.

If, driven from this idea by its inconsistency with the Divine Omnipotence, we say that all necessary Christian truth must have come down to us in the Bible, we are simply begging the question whether or no anything has come down to us outside the Bible. We cannot dispose of this by objecting to some teachings of the Roman Church ; there still remains a possibility that somewhere or other some body of believers, such as the Greeks for example, may be in possession of the entire revelation. We cannot be excused from satisfying ourselves by thorough investigation on this point. And we should also be sure that the teachings of Rome are really inconsistent with the Bible. Can you say that by your own study you are

sure of this, or that you know by actual inquiry, from Catholic authorities, what the teachings of Rome really are?

If Almighty God had in the Bible or elsewhere told us that this book contained the whole of Christianity, we should be on good ground. If Christ Himself had written the book and set it forth as a text-book, so to speak, of His religion, we could rest securely in it, and have no need to inquire farther.

That the Bible is not a book, like the Koran for instance, set forth by the founder of the religion as its authoritative exposition, is in fact the fundamental weakness of Bible Protestantism. If Christ had intended His religion to be propagated and preserved by means of a book, can any conceivable reason be urged why He should not have written one? Of His ability to do so there can, for the Christian, be no question.

But the Bible, so far from being such a book, is simply, as far as the New Testament, its important part for us, is concerned, a collection of Christian writings, on its face not essentially more conclusive than the works of other early Christian writers would be, especially if we consider the Gospel of St. Mark, and the Gospel and Acts of St. Luke; for no special reason is evident why their words should be infallible. They were not apostles; and we do not read of

their having any peculiar Divine commission to teach Christianity to the world.

Now, this consideration opens another chasm under the feet of Bible Protestants, which would be of itself fatal to them. It is this: what certainty have they, after all, that the books of the Bible were written by inspired men, and that no others were? Why do they admit just these, and reject others? How do they know for sure even that these were written by the authors to whom they are commonly ascribed? For one thing, do they know for sure who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, or even the Gospels themselves? May it not have been some quite irresponsible or merely private author? What critical or scholarly ability or learning can ever give us the certainty we need on matters like these, where Divine faith is so much needed, and error so dangerous?

The fact is, that this blind faith in the Bible, as Protestants have the book, got together for us English-speaking people under King James, but trusted in as if it had been brought to earth visibly and publicly by an angel from heaven, is an act far more unreasonable and groundless than any which they even charge us Catholics with making.

If they choose to make such a blind act, urging the example of so many good men who have done the same, or claiming that

the Spirit of God teaches them to do it, well and good ; but let them not claim any special superiority of intelligence, or any particular reasonableness in so doing. Let them not pretend that it is anything more than an assumption, in itself, to say the least, no better than that of one who would believe the Pope to be infallible simply because so many other good people believe the same, or because God seems to inspire him with that conviction.

Reason is as much abandoned in one case as in the other ; but the latter view is not that of a Catholic, and I think we shall see that in fact reason has a good deal more to say in favor of the genuine Catholic position.

And I will repeat in conclusion, lest I should seem to despise this holiest of books, that Catholics believe in it and revere it as much as and even more than Protestants ; but we have, while they have not, a rational and consistent ground for so doing.

CHAPTER III.

THE CATHOLIC IDEA OF CHRISTIANITY.

THOUGH others beside Bible Protestants have from time to time separated themselves, and are now separated, from the Catholic Church, there seems to be no distinct theory on which they have done so which we need especially consider. For either they stand on ground similar to that taken by Catholics, which we are about to describe, or they pretend to some new revelation supplementary to that of Christ, which puts them outside the class to whom this book is specially addressed; or they have ceased to regard Christ as a Divine, or at least infallible, teacher, being in fact eclectics in the matter of religion, and not believing, strictly speaking, in any one true religion at all, and therefore equally outside of our direct scope.

We will then take up at once the Catholic idea, or theory if you wish to call it so, of the Christian religion, as distinguished from that which we have been discussing.

This theory simply is that the Christian faith has been taught, and was intended by its Divine Founder to be taught, in all ages on the same plan that was adopted in the beginning;

that is to say, by authorized human teachers, whose adherence to it has been secured by a special Divine assistance, as that of the apostles was in the beginning.

Now this is, of course, an impossible plan for a merely human founder of a religion. A mere man, who has arrived by meditation and the practice of virtue at some great religious truths, or what he considers as such, even though he also believes that in this he has been assisted by Almighty God in some special way, cannot feel safe as to the propagation of these truths without loss or admixture by simply committing them to the charge of other men. The precise memory of what he, the founder, said will gradually be lost; the ideas of his representatives will after a time be confounded with his own. Of course he may be content that such should be the case; he may regard the religion which is taught in his name as intended by God to be the work of many co-operators; he lays the foundation, others continue the building; and perhaps even the foundation may be somewhat altered or improved as time goes on. But a religion like this is not such as those whom we are addressing regard the Christian religion to be.

For a human founder, then, who wishes the record of his ideas to be perpetual; who desires that none of them should be lost, and that noth-

ing should be admitted outside of them in the religion which he establishes, except indeed what the light of nature teaches all men, no course seems to be open except to commit his ideas or his religion to writing. In this way there can remain little doubt, except what may arise from the errors of copyists or printers, as to what he actually said ; and generally these errors will be slight and easily detected.

But after all, though it is the best course he can adopt, it is open to serious difficulties. For no language can be made so plain that there will not be an opening for discussions as to its meaning. To take an example from another matter, the Constitution of the United States was drawn up with the utmost care ; but for all that it is not possible, and never was expected by its authors to be possible, for every one to agree on its meaning without a court to interpret it.

Now, it is true that a human founder of religion can provide for such a court of interpretation for his ideas, and his provisions will probably be carried out ; but he cannot possibly insure that the ideas of this court will always agree with his own. His own thoughts will then, in spite of all he can do, be gradually changed somewhat by the gloss put upon them by his interpreters.

But for a Divine founder these objections can-

not, of course, exist. God is able to keep His truth in the world in many ways. He can, for instance, reveal it to each man individually ; or He can by repeated public manifestations of it, accompanied by miraculous proofs such as those furnished by Christ and His apostles, prevent the world from forgetting it ; or He can commit it to a book, as a human founder would, preventing false interpretations of that book by making it so clear that it could not be misunderstood, or by establishing a court of interpretation for it, the decisions of which He would Himself secure from error.

But on the Protestant theory, He has adopted neither of these plans. The only book which they admit as coming from Him is not so clear that it cannot be misunderstood, nor, according to them, has any court been established by Him for its correct interpretation. Some of them, indeed, claim that He does reveal it to every earnest inquirer without the aid of any visible teacher, but the actual discordance of those who claim to arrive at it in that way, or even with the help of the Bible, is enough to confute that claim. As for repeated miraculous manifestations of it, such are not recorded in history.

Other methods could no doubt be followed by the Divine Wisdom, beside these which I have mentioned ; but we cannot, perhaps, see them very clearly, with the exception of one, the

simplest of all that we know of, and requiring the least special intervention on God's part. And that is the one which I have mentioned as that which Catholics believe He has adopted through the whole course of Christianity, and which Protestants themselves must admit He did at its beginning.

It is that of having for a fundamental authority in all ages, for a means of deciding all doubtful points, not a book alone, or a book with authorized interpreters, but *simply the authorized interpreters of the faith* such as the apostles were, with a book perhaps to help them, but still not absolutely needing that book for the discharge of their office any more than the apostles themselves did for theirs.

This simple plan it is the essential point of Protestantism to ignore or combat. As has been seen, they have nothing satisfactory or historically successful to offer in place of it, but it they will not admit.

Some Protestants, like those of the Church of England, go so far as to believe in an organized and Divinely constituted body of men, established to teach and preserve the faith of Christ; but they refuse to admit a Divine supervision of this teaching, at least of such a kind as will enable any one without hesitation to know just where to look for the truth. Their ground, as has been said, is similar to ours, but lacking in

this important respect. And history shows only too plainly that the Church, in their sense of the term, has varied in its doctrine, taught dogmas at various times, and in various places at the same time, inconsistent with each other, and therefore to a considerable extent erroneous.

Protestants, then, and indeed all Christians separated from the Catholic Church, do not acknowledge the existence of this actual living and precisely determinable authority in the world, to which the preservation of the faith has been entrusted. It is, indeed, possible to withdraw from the government and discipline which Catholics believe to be also entrusted to this authority, without doubting its claim to be the Divinely constituted teacher of the faith; but this sort of rebellion against it, which we call *schism*, hardly exists pure and simple at present; the Greek Church furnishing, however, a near approximation to it.

The question now naturally arising, as we examine the Catholic theory, is where precisely this authority is located; who are the successors of the apostles, not, be it observed, in their inspiration, or in their power of working miracles, but in this office so needed for the stability of religion, that of interpreting the true meaning of the Christian revelation, and of deciding doubts which might arise about it.

Whoever they are, they must be men dis-

tinctly recognizable ; not merely men noted for talent or learning, or even for virtue, since these tests are too vague and doubtful. They must, therefore, be men occupying some definite position in the Church ; they must naturally belong to the clergy, since teaching the faith belongs to them, if anything does ; and to the highest and most distinguished rank of the clergy, if such ranks exist in it.

As it is, then, only among those Christians who recognize such ranks or grades in the clergy that this belief in a certain living authority in matters exists, only two opinions can well exist upon this point. One is, that the whole body of bishops must be called to a council, and that this council, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, determines the faith ; or that one or more of them have been, by a special Divine prerogative, appointed to this office.

The latter is the teaching of the Catholic Church, as formulated in the Vatican Council. Its decision necessarily removes the doubts of such as might otherwise have held that the meeting of the bishops generally was necessary for authoritative judgments on points of faith ; for here they have their own authority speaking.

The Vatican Council, then, teaches unequivocally that the supreme power in determining matters of faith rests in the person of the Pope,

whom Catholics regard as the successor of St. Peter in the Apostolic See of Rome.

We will proceed, then, in the next chapter to discuss this matter of the infallibility, as it is called, of the Pope; to explain just what is meant by it, and to remove misapprehensions which may exist.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

IT ought to be clear from what has been said that the special prerogative which Catholics now unhesitatingly and universally believe to have been conferred on the Pope by the Divine Founder of Christianity has a very special and limited range, though certainly very complete in its proper domain. It consists in his ability to decide questions concerning religion about which there might be room for doubt in the minds of Christians, either on account of there being a large number of adherents, or apparently strong arguments, on both sides of the questions. Of course if an opinion is clearly supported by the plain text of Scripture, or if it has been held by general consent in the Church as being of faith, or if it has been settled by a previous decision, there is no need for the Pope to interfere; and in point of fact he seldom does

so. But still a good many cases have occurred, and probably will occur, in which such an adjudication becomes necessary. It is not required that an appeal should be made to him; he acts as it seems expedient to himself, not neglecting, however, in matters of considerable doubt to take advice from learned men.

In the more important questions which occasionally arise, it has always been deemed more prudent to formally convoke the whole episcopate in a general or œcumenical council, and not only to hear their opinions, but to take their vote on the matter; for the bishops are not merely advisers, but really judges of the faith with the Pope. But the decision of their majority would not be accepted unless confirmed by him.

Now, let it be clearly understood that it is not the office of the Pope to act as one inspired, to receive or to give to the world any new revelation. It is merely to decide what the original deposit, as we call it, of faith was, as committed by Christ to His apostles; or, in other words, to repeat the decisions which the apostles themselves would have made with regard to the doctrines of Christianity.

Still less is it his office to settle matters of science, or ordinary questions of fact of any kind. Not but what the domains claimed at least by science, and those of faith, may some-

times overlap ; as, for instance, they may to some extent in the matter of evolution, especially if that is supposed to apply to the human soul ; or as they certainly do when so-called science asserts that matter existed from all eternity. I say "so-called" science, for it is plain that we can never by scientific investigation arrive at any proof of a hypothesis of this nature. And even questions of historical fact may belong to faith, by being necessarily connected with some of its dogmas, or by forming part of the inspired record of Holy Scripture ; there would, for instance, be a conflict of history or geology with the Church if it should be asserted, in the name of either of these branches of learning, that the account of the deluge was simply a myth.

But conflicts of this sort are very rare. Practically a Catholic is not impeded in any kind of study or investigation by any fear of Papal condemnation.

Further—and this is an important and much misapprehended point—it would be an enormous mistake to suppose that the Pope is considered infallible, even on matters of faith, in his ordinary conversation ; nor is he believed to be so in preaching ; nor necessarily in his writings concerning matters of religion. In order that he should be infallible, it is necessary that he should act *formally* as the teacher of the whole Church, as the successor of the apostles ;

and practically we may say it is necessary that his teaching should not be given by word of mouth, but in writing, in a regular document; for if he merely spoke, some uncertainty would exist as to what he actually said, whatever means might be taken to report it.

And yet, though all this is well known and understood among Catholics, how many Protestants there are who imagine that we believe the Pope to be incapable of error, no matter what he is speaking about, or in what way or under what circumstances he expresses his thoughts; or perhaps that we even regard him as infallible in the very thoughts themselves!

Great as this error is, many fall into an error much greater. It is often supposed, indeed we sometimes see it stated, or what is even worse, calmly assumed, in the literature of the day, that Catholics believe the Pope to be incapable of *doing* anything morally wrong. Infallibility is confounded with impeccability. One would suppose that the English language would be better understood; indeed, on other subjects the writers of this nonsense seem to be men of fair accuracy. It is only in speaking of us that they make these absurd blunders.

This whole notion is simply ridiculous. Good Catholics have, indeed, generally a respect for the clergy; at least they have a high idea of what their character should be, and when

the clergy live fairly good lives, are disposed to rate their virtue as greater than it actually is; and especially, they believe the Pope, unless the contrary should be plainly evident, to be a man of more than the usual moral excellence which they ascribe to the clergy in general. And they have reason for doing so; for it is clear beforehand that the Church would, if we may say so, be naturally inclined to put its best foot foremost; and also the actual lives of the Popes, as recorded in history, show plainly that they were as a rule most estimable, perhaps even saintly, men.

But they are very far from thinking that this is necessarily the case. So far from thinking that an action is right simply because the Pope does it, they would be more scandalized at a departure from the moral law in his case than they would in that of any one else; just as it is perfectly obvious that they are more disedified by a sin in any clergyman than by the same one in a layman.

It is of course true, however, that in points about which the conscience of men is more or less uncertain, Catholics, and Protestants as well, are inclined to think it probable that an action is right if they see a clergyman do it; for they know that the clergy give more study to these matters, and believe that they would as a rule act according to their conscience, which

would naturally be better instructed than that of the laity in general. But Catholics do not, any more than Protestants, hold it as certain that any clergyman, or that the Pope any more necessarily than any other clergyman, does *uniformly* act according to his conscience.

And let me mention here, though it is a little out of our direct line, another foolish error entertained largely about the Pope, which seems to be a sort of corollary, as a geometer would say, or, in other words, an easy conclusion from his supposed impeccability. That is the notion often entertained by those outside the Catholic Church, that the Pope never goes to confession. Some even think that the clergy do not; but more are quite sure that the Pope is exempt.

But so far is this from being the case that the clergy confess much more frequently than the laity in general; and the Pope himself fully as often as, if not oftener than the average of the clergy. And to whom does the Pope confess? Why, he chooses his confessor, as any one else would do; usually he would select some priest of well-known virtue and learning; probably he would choose a member of some religious order—for example, a Franciscan, a Dominican, or a Jesuit. You see then clearly that the Pope himself does not believe that he is sinless.

This matter of morality of which I have been speaking has, however, a connection with the infallibility which we are discussing, though not the one which is erroneously supposed.

It is this: Catholics do believe the Pope to be able to make infallible decisions with regard to *morals* as well as faith. That is to say, that he can, when occasion arises, solemnly instruct the faithful with regard to principles of morality, and decide points with regard to it on which good and learned men have differed; and there are plenty of such points, as any one will see who will take the trouble to consult treatises on morals. One will find even more of them in Catholic works than in Protestant ones; not, however, for the reason that Catholic morality is less precise than Protestant, but because Catholic writers have discussed these matters much more thoroughly and with much more detail, and hence come upon more of these questions; and that the Popes have still left many of them open.

But mind, it by no means follows, any more in morals than in faith, that because the Pope can solemnly instruct the faithful infallibly, he *always or on all occasions* holds or gives utterance to correct views with regard to right or wrong, unless the matter is one clear to all reasonable men, or that some decision has actually been made in due form with regard to it.

Still less does it follow that he necessarily lives up to the principles which he himself acknowledges as true. There is no essential reason why he should do so, any more than any one else.

Now a few remarks, more explicit than those previously made, with regard to the way in which we suppose the infallibility to attach to the Pope's solemn teaching of the Church with regard to faith and morals. In the first place, it is clear, from what has been said, that he is not habitually raised to any higher plane in these matters than other Christians; for it is only at the time of his formal decisions that he needs to be, and we do not suppose his prerogative to extend any farther than is needed for the good of the Church. Secondly, we do not hold that even at these times he is, properly speaking, inspired; it is simply that God assists him in a special way, preventing him from making any decision at all if the way is not reasonably clear to it; or if He allows him to make the decision, insuring that this decision shall contain nothing contrary to the truth.

As a matter of fact, these formal decisions, or definitions as we call them, are not made carelessly or on the spur of the moment, but after much consideration and prayer, especially in the more important matters, and even in lesser ones where reasonable doubt seems to exist.

And in the greater matters, much advice is also taken, especially of the bishops, who, as has been said, are regarded as judges on these questions together with the Pope; and often this precaution has gone so far as the assembling of a general council, where the subject could be fully discussed.

I trust, then, that this much misunderstood subject ought to be somewhat clearer to those who may read what has been just said than it was before. And let me add now, as a little argument in support of the belief that Almighty God does actually preserve these Papal definitions from error, the historical fact that no two of them have ever been contradictory, and they have all formed with each other, and with the faith as determined and agreed on without recourse to them, a logical and consistent whole. Human reason, memory, research, and learning are no doubt factors which would go far to produce such a result; but human passions are also potent; and it seems very unlikely that such a success would be obtained, covering a period of eighteen hundred years, by human resources alone.

But still it may be said that this Divine interposition is a miracle which we have no right to expect. Let us look into this. It is true that the whole Christian revelation is a blessing to which we have no right; but if God wills to

give something to mankind in permanence, it is reasonable to suppose that He will take measures to secure that permanence. And could any simpler measures, any requiring less interposition on His part, be adopted, so far as we can see? Protestants give us a book; they acknowledge that it is naturally obscure in some parts, but say that God will enlighten the reader as to its meaning. I say nothing about the confutation of this theory by actual experience; but in itself it is plain that it requires even more interposition on God's part for each individual Christian than the Catholic one does for the Pope alone.

Catholics claim that the Pope is infallible on certain occasions; Protestants that each and every one of them is infallible all the time. Which claim is the greater or the more unreasonable?

Some one must be infallible, now and then at least, or certainty with regard to the Christian faith becomes impossible. Why should it not be the Pope, who occupies, as is admitted even by Protestants themselves, the most prominent position in Christendom?

But let us see briefly whether there are not arguments, drawn from the Holy Scripture itself, to show that the Pope must be the one to whom this special prerogative has been given, if given to any.

We find, if we read the Gospels attentively that our Lord, though giving to each of the apostles the same general commission to teach all nations (Matt. xxviii. 19), did not treat them on terms of absolute equality. Peter, James, and John were, in the first place, specially selected by Him as witnesses of His transfiguration, and His agony in the garden of Gethsemane. Of these James had the privilege of being first called to join His Master in heaven; John of being His specially beloved disciple, and the one to whom Jesus on the cross entrusted the care of His mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

But it was to Peter that He gave the most marked signs of a special pre-eminence over the rest. Especially do we see this in the celebrated passage (Matt. xvi. 18) where Christ says to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church"; the word Peter meaning a rock. And in St. Luke's Gospel we read (Luke xxii. 31): "The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for *thee*, that *thy* faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren." (The italics are, of course, our own.) And St. John tells us (John xxi. 15-17) that our Lord thrice committed in a special way the charge of His lambs and sheep to Peter, in

response to his protestation of love for his Master: "Feed my lambs, feed my lambs, feed my sheep."

Protestants try, of course, to explain away these passages; but it is hard to imagine that they do not place St. Peter in some way at the head of the apostolic college, and as having in a special way the right of governing and teaching the faithful which all the apostles enjoyed. The real question is rather whether or no this pre-eminence of Peter passed to any one at his death; whether he had any successor in his special privileges.)

But one thing seems quite clear: that there could be no one to whom any special pre-eminence could be assigned as a permanent institution in the Church, except some one who was in some special sense the successor of St. Peter.

Now, no one has even claimed to be the successor of St. Peter in any special way whatever except the Bishop of Rome, in which city, by the common consent of Christians, it has been generally agreed St. Peter fixed his ultimate residence, and in which he suffered martyrdom. No one else except the Bishop of Antioch, which city St. Peter first chose for his see, could reasonably make such a claim; and on his part no such claim has been urged.

If, then, there is any one who has a claim

founded in Scripture to any pre-eminence over the bishops of the Church in general, that one must be the bishop of St. Peter's see of Rome and indeed this distinction has been generally accorded in some way or shape to this bishop or, in other words, to the Pope, even by those who have separated themselves from his control.

There is, in short, no plausible candidate for the leadership of the Church except the Pope; and there never has been one except him, who could rest his claim on Scriptural grounds.

If, then, this office of infallible teacher of the faith, or restorer of it when it may in the lapse of time become doubtful, this office which has been shown to be the means by which the faith could be preserved with the minimum of Divine interposition, belongs to any one, it is to the Pope that it would naturally belong; and he is the only one who has permanently claimed or exercised it, no pretensions on the part of others having, we may say, been seriously made or entertained.

It would seem, then, that the Catholic claim of the Pope's infallibility, after the manner which has been described, is both reasonable and Scriptural. I do not propose here to go into a further proof of it, or a defence of it against objections which might be made; to do

so properly would require a volume; and such volumes have been written, and can be consulted by all. But I do submit that this Catholic claim or theory, so far from being superstitious or unreasonable, is *prima facie* the most reasonable one that can be urged (especially when we consider actual historical facts), if we assume that the Christian religion was a definite teaching of supernatural truths to be perpetuated to the end of time; and that its superiority in reasonableness to the theory either that the Bible was originally intended to be, or that it now has become in the providence of God, the only means available for this end, is obvious on the very surface to any one who will give the matter any serious consideration.

In the next chapter I will proceed to explain the exalted opinion which Catholics have, and the use which we make, of that most holy and venerable book, the Bible; to show that we regard it as truly the Word of God, and to state the reasons which we have for doing so.

CHAPTER V.

THE CATHOLIC IDEA OF THE BIBLE.

IT has been stated that Catholics regard the Bible as the Word of God, and revere it as such, no less than Protestants; and indeed even more. We look on it, then, as a most certain testimony to the Christian religion, and a most pure source from which to obtain the true faith. We reject nothing which it contains, we accept it as a most precious gift of God, from beginning to end.

We accept, indeed, more of it than Protestants do. For, as has been said, there are some books, which all belong, by the way, to the Old Testament, which we have in our Bibles, but which are omitted from most Protestant ones. In other words, Protestants, at the time of the Reformation, reformed the Bible as well as a good many other things; they dropped from it a number of books which their forefathers for centuries had considered as forming a part of it.

And now let us see what reason we have for accepting the Bible as we have it. It is hard to see how a Protestant can have absolute certainty that all the books of his Bible are inspired. If he makes a study of the matter, he

will find that many learned men doubt even the authenticity of great portions of it ; so he cannot rest his faith in it on a general agreement among wise men that it was really written by the authors to whom it is commonly assigned. Nor can he defend it on the ground that all pious and faithful Christians have always believed its various books to have come from the writers to which they are usually ascribed, or that they have always considered them as inspired by the Spirit of God. Of course there is a difference between these two beliefs ; there seems, for instance, to be no obvious reason, as has been remarked, why the writings of Mark or Luke, even if we are sure we have them, should be inspired any more than those of any other of the early Christians.

The fact is, that during all the ages of persecution—that is, during the first three centuries of Christianity, and for a considerable time after—though the books of the Old Testament had been accepted from the Jews, those of the New were still by no means put in a definite shape. Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, the celebrated ecclesiastical historian, writing in the early part of the fourth century, tells us that several of the books we now accept were then in doubt.

He says, for instance, in the first book of his history, with regard to the second Epistle of

St. Peter: "We have not, indeed, understood it to be embodied with the sacred books, yet as it appeared useful to many, it was studiously read with the other Scriptures" (chap. iii.) And in another place (chap. xxiv.) he remarks, "Besides the Gospel of John, his first Epistle is acknowledged without dispute, both by those of the present day, and also by the ancients. The other two Epistles, however, are disputed. The opinions respecting the Revelation are still greatly divided." A little later on (chap. xxv.) he gives the following canon of the New Testament, quite in full: "Here, among the first, must be placed the holy quaternion of the Gospels; these are followed by 'The Book of the Acts of the Apostles'; after this must be mentioned the Epistles of Paul, which are followed by the acknowledged first Epistle of John, as also the first of Peter, to be admitted in like manner. After these are to be placed, if proper, the Revelation of John, concerning which we shall offer the different opinions in due time. These, then, are acknowledged as genuine. Among the disputed books, although they are well known and approved by many, is reputed that called the Epistle of James and Jude. Also the 'second Epistle of Peter,' and those called the 'second and third of John,' whether they are of the evangelist or some other of the same name." He also states

further on that a good deal of doubt existed as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; this point is, indeed, at the present time a good deal discussed by critics.

It is evident, then, that in the time of Eusebius no certainty was felt as to precisely what books of the New Testament should be admitted as being of authority. Various other authors, previous and subsequent to Eusebius, give somewhat different catalogues of the sacred books.

Now, the point is when and in what way the canon of the New Testament was first definitely settled on ; that is, settled by an authority which might seem at least to speak in the name of the Church, and not merely in that of private criticism or learning.

The first Christian synod which we find as sanctioning a special canon, or collection of books as properly belonging to the Bible, was that of Hippo, in Africa, in the year 393. This canon of Hippo was confirmed by councils held at Carthage in 397 and 419, and in 474, as nearly as can be ascertained, by Pope Gelasius. This canon is identical with that now held as the correct one by Catholics, and solemnly repeated in the Council of Trent, at the time of the Reformation. It contains, therefore, what Protestants call the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, but it rejects none of those which

Protestants receive; in the new Testament there is no difference between the two, the Protestants having taken the same books as genuine and inspired which the Catholic Church had so regarded, and no others.

Now, it is quite manifest why Catholics regard just such books as belonging to the Bible, and such others as not so belonging. It is because such is the decision of the Church assembled in council, and of the Popes acting in their official capacity. Whatever one may think of it, it is evidently a clear and intelligible reason; for we regard the Church and the Popes as infallible in such matters.

But what solid reason have Protestants to induce them to accept any definite canon of Scripture? Not the decrees of the Popes or the councils of the Church of course, for these they do not accept in other matters. And if not these, what else? Why is the canon of Pope Gelasius any better for them than the one we have given, from Eusebius, the historian? It becomes for them simply a matter of private judgment whether a certain book of the Bible is inspired or not; and therefore since the Bible is all they have as an authoritative basis for Christianity, the strength of this sole authority becomes thus a matter of private judgment; many, if not most of its books become not substantially better than others written in early

Christian times which might be used instead of them; and indeed the whole matter of faith reduces to private judgment. The Protestant has no sure ground to rest on; he can only construct his religion by selecting what it seems probable to him was the teaching of Christ. He can, of course, adopt other people's opinions; but they also can have for him no more than a human value.

But after all, it may be urged, how is your own basis a sure one? You have been proving the Church, the infallibility of the Pope, etc., by means of the Bible, and now you turn round and prove the Bible by the Church.

This criticism seems at first to be a very sound one, but it is not so sound as it appears. For we all have to start with some recorded facts, some testimony of others, in convincing ourselves about any matter of fact which has not come under our own personal observation. And it is absurd, and contrary to common sense, to say that we can never arrive at certainty in this way. If we cannot, then we are not certain about any point of history; we do not know for sure that there was ever such a person as George Washington or Christopher Columbus. Nay more, without depending on testimony we cannot be confident that there is now any such country as England or France, unless we have been there ourselves; even the

answers we receive to letters which we undertake to send there may be part of a gigantic conspiracy set up against us by the Post-office.

Very well then ; to prove that there was such a person as Christ, and to arrive at some knowledge of what He said and did, we take the accounts which have come down to us, either committed to writing, or handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another. We find them concurrent to a considerable extent, and we find especially those accounts so concurrent which are written in what we call the Bible ; and the very fact that these latter agree well with each other, that they have been considered in all ages as substantially correct, and that we find in history no serious protest against them, and a general agreement as to their authorship, gives us more certainty as to what they contain than we have with regard to almost any facts which occurred at the time they appeared. We have, then, a more reasonable certainty about Christ, and what He did and said, than we have about past events not coming under our own observation.

We find, then, with this reasonable certainty, from the Bible record, that He established a Church, and constituted an infallible authority in it, to last to the end of time ; so far, that is, as it is admitted that this really is the testimony of the Bible.

Then, being convinced of the existence of this authority, by means of it we establish, not what we started with, but something different. We are not convinced by the Church that there is a Bible record, and that in its main points it can be relied on with certainty ; for this we knew before. But the Church tells us that this book has more than a merely human authority, that it is the Word of God, inspired by Him ; and that just such writings and such alone can be considered as belonging to it. This last is something we did not know before ; but our conviction of it rests on the same rational grounds as our first conviction did that it was a trustworthy book, humanly speaking. One comes from the other.

The argument may be put, in brief, as follows : If the Bible is a trustworthy book, it is more than that ; it is inspired. For the Church is infallible, if the Bible is trustworthy ; and the Church tells us that the Bible is inspired. The reasoning is very similar to that by which we very properly prove Christ's Divinity. Christ, we say, was a wise and good man, and therefore would not claim to be God if He were not ; but he did claim to be God ; therefore He really is so. This must be admitted by every one who believes He did say various things which the Gospels recorded of Him. If He said them, He either was God, or

He was, as the Jews maintained, a blasphemer, either wicked or insane.

But after all, it may be urged that our conviction of the Divine authority of the Bible will never at best rise to a higher certainty than the merely human one with which it began.

In answer to this, it may be said, in the first place, that we do not depend on the Bible alone to prove the infallibility of the Church; numerous other arguments can be given; as, for example, that already spoken of, the actual accordance in its decisions through all these centuries, which could hardly have been secured without Divine interposition.

But the true answer is, that God, by a direct action of grace in our hearts, builds on a merely rational foundation a secure edifice of Divine faith. We believe by faith, not by reason; but our faith is rational, as reason has led us to it.

Faith once implanted by God in our hearts, it will stand secure of its own strength, even if the rational foundation passes from our minds; as a solid stone arch stands after the wooden frame is removed round which it was built.

But though faith itself is thus secure in its own strength, and may even be immediately implanted by God in an individual soul without argument, it is not reasonable to suppose that a faith independent of reason and argument can be intended by Him for adoption by the world.

This is just the point where the Catholic belief in the Bible has the advantage of the Protestant one. The one is rational and logical; the other irrational and blind. The former is founded on good reasons; the latter on what is, comparatively, guesswork.

However, it is not so much the object of this chapter, or of this work in general, to defend the faith of Catholics, as to show just what that faith is.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCIPAL POINTS OF CATHOLIC FAITH.

SO far my chief endeavor has been to show what the basis of the Catholic faith is, or what are the sources from which we derive it. I trust that it is perfectly clear to all that we do not believe that new additions are being made to it as time goes on; that we do not hold that the Pope or any other authority in the Church receives from time to time new revelations, and proposes them to the faithful to be received implicitly by them; but that we believe the faith or doctrine of the Church to have been fully in the possession of the Apostles, and that if anything is promulgated or definitely decreed by the Church as being part of the faith, the

meaning is that this was a thing which the Apostles themselves believed and preached.

The Church, then, and the Holy Scripture are simply our means for finding out what the doctrine of the Apostles was. And it must not be imagined that we trust more to the Church than to the Bible. In point of fact the Bible is for us, as well as for Protestants, the higher authority of the two; for its teaching is inspired by the Holy Ghost, whereas that of the Pope or of the Church is merely preserved from error by Him. But in order to reverence the Holy Scripture and to learn our faith from it, it is necessary in the first place to know what is Holy Scripture for certain, and what cannot be depended on as such; and it is also necessary to have a guide to help us to understand its sense, which is obscure in many places, as is evident by the different interpretations which good and learned men have put on it. But where its sense is plain, the Church does not presume to overrule or ignore it; and the Church is not afraid of any part of the Bible as being irreconcilable with her doctrine.

To these two great sources of Christian truth another may be added with evident propriety. This is what we call *tradition*. By this we mean the account of the faith which is handed down by word of mouth, or by writing, from one generation to another. Any ordinarily

well-instructed Catholic can, for example, give an account of his faith in its principal points ; he can teach it orally to his children, or write it down for those generally who are to come after him. Still better can this be done by the learned who have made the faith their special study.

Now, one such statement of the doctrine of the Church in general, or of any special point or points of it, does not of itself amount to so very much, as the source from which it proceeds is not infallible ; but if any point is found on which the great majority of these statements agree, the evidence in favor of this point becomes very strong. It does not give the same certainty which comes from the plain words of Scripture, or from a definite decree of the Church itself ; but it gives something very near it. And the Bible itself gives testimony to the utility of this means in preserving the faith entire and unchanged. "Brethren," says St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians (II. Thess. ii. 14), "hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or our epistle." And to Timothy he writes (II. Tim. ii. 2), "the things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also."

But really we hardly need this guarantee of the usefulness of this method of preserving any

kind of valuable information. It is practised constantly in all the arts and trades of men, and even in the sciences; and in religion it is, indeed, used by Protestants themselves.

Let us now come to the consideration of the actual doctrine of the Church, as derived by us from these three sources. But let it not be understood that we mean that all its points, though held, as we believe, by the Apostles, were taught by them with equal prominence. Some are more important than others in themselves; and some—as, for instance, that of the Resurrection of our Lord—were more necessary to be insisted on at the times in which they lived and had to work. With regard to others, also, as is simple matter of history, we know that instruction was in the early ages given secretly—that is, only to those who had been baptized; in order that doctrines which were difficult or mysterious might not be exposed to public ridicule or misinterpretation. This “discipline of the secret,” as it was called, applied specially to the dogma of the Real Presence of Christ in the consecrated elements.

Again, other matters of faith, though very fundamental and important, were not so much insisted on in various ages of the Church as in others, because they were not then denied or called in question. Indeed the definitions of the Church, the bringings of its faith to the

surface as it were, have generally been occasioned by the spread of opinions contrary to that faith. Thus, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity itself was not clearly defined for about three hundred years after Christ, when the definition was required by the emergencies of the time; and so one point of faith after another has been specially emphasized by definitions as the times may seem to demand.

The creed or collection of dogmas, then, which I am about to present, need not all have been taught with equal prominence or emphasis by the Apostles; there may, indeed, have been other matters to which they devoted more attention than to some of these. But these are the ones most important to be understood and formally or explicitly accepted at present; they constitute the profession or declaration of faith made by converts to the Church when they are received into it; and naturally the ones to which the greatest interest attaches.

This profession or declaration of faith is, then, as follows :

"I (the name is here given), having before my eyes the holy Gospels, which I touch with my hand, and knowing that no one can be saved without that faith which the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church holds, believes, and teaches, against which I grieve that I have greatly erred, inasmuch as I have held and believed doctrines opposed to her teaching :

"I now, with grief and contrition for my past errors, profess that I believe the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church to be the only and true Church established on earth by Jesus Christ, to which I submit myself with my whole heart. I believe all the articles that she proposes to my belief, and I reject and condemn all that she rejects and condemns, and I am ready to observe all that she commands me. And especially, I profess that I believe :

"One only God in three divine Persons, distinct from, and equal to each other—that is to say, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ;

"The Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and the personal union of the two Natures, the divine and the human ; the divine Maternity of the most holy Mary, together with her most spotless Virginity ;

"The true, real, and substantial presence of the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist ;

"The seven Sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind ; that is to say, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, Matrimony ;

"Purgatory, the Resurrection of the dead, Everlasting life ;

"The Primacy, not only of honor, but also of jurisdiction, of the Roman Pontiff, successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, Vicar of Jesus Christ ;

"The veneration of the Saints, and of their images ;

"The authority of the Apostolic and Ecclesiastical Traditions, and of the Holy Scriptures, which we must interpret and understand only in the sense which our holy mother the Catholic Church has held, and does hold ;

“And everything else that has been defined, and declared by the sacred Canons, and by the general Councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent, and delivered, defined, and declared by the General Council of the Vatican, especially concerning the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff, and his infallible teaching authority.

“With a sincere heart, therefore, and with unfeigned faith, I detest and abjure every error, heresy, and sect opposed to the said Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church. So help me God, and these His holy Gospels, which I touch with my hand.”

The preamble, in which it is stated that no one can be saved without the Catholic faith, and that the convert is ready to do what the Church commands, I shall discuss later on, when it will be better understood. At present we will confine ourselves to the definite articles proposed.

In them you have the Catholic creed in all its principal points. There are some others naturally following from or connected with these ; but it is safe to say that none will give you difficulty if these do not. I shall, however, touch on some matters not directly mentioned here ; for it is not the desire of the Church to keep anything back ; the “discipline of the secret,” mentioned above, though no doubt necessary in its day, is not observed at present.

But no doubt some of the points given here may present some difficulty, and some you may misunderstand as you read them, either on

account of the brevity with which they are expressed, or because of the false notions about them which you may have entertained. Let us then look at them more carefully and see how much difficulty, if any, remains after our examination.

It is likely that some will ; especially as we shall not in these pages discuss matters very minutely, and you will not have a chance to ask questions or propose doubts. I only want now to show you, if possible, that the Catholic faith is not such a monstrous or unreasonable thing as you may have imagined ; the only way to settle *every* question that may occur is to go to some priest, or if you cannot make up your mind to that, to consult some well-instructed Catholic ; but of course the priest is the best one to talk to, for he has made these matters his special study ; and he will probably be able to appoint some time to talk to you, if too busy just when you happen to call on him. You will probably find him to have more in common with yourself than you suppose, even though he may be a foreigner by birth ; and he will very likely be an American citizen by birth, not merely by adoption ; and it is not so difficult to find a priest who has been a Protestant, and who will understand, by his own experience, just what your ideas and your difficulties are.

Now let us look at the articles of faith **given**

above. The first is: "*One only God in three divine Persons, distinct from, and equal to each other—that is to say, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*"

No doubt this is a doctrine which in itself presents difficulty; it is a great mystery, one peculiar to the Christian faith, and one which we cannot hope to understand thoroughly, still less to convince ourselves of by reasoning. But then the difficulty which it presents is one to which probably you have been accustomed; for almost all Christian denominations hold and teach this same doctrine. Protestantism made no protest on this point; the Greek Church of course teaches it, and so do all the churches of the East. So we need not consider it as an objection to the Catholic Church in particular; it would rather be so if she did not teach it; and we may, in spite of the great importance of this doctrine, pass on to something else.

Next we have "*the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Here again we have something substantially the same as what the great majority of Protestants maintain. I will state—though very probably you know already—what *Incarnation* means. It means simply that the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, took our human

nature, and became man as well as God, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Almost all Protestants, as I have said, also believe this; but they are not always very clear about just the time and the way in which this wonderful work was accomplished. Some, I think, believe that the man Christ became divine only when the Holy Ghost descended on him at the time of his baptism. Some, perhaps, regard him to have been so at his birth, but not before. But the Apostles' Creed, which most Protestants recite or at least believe, is quite clear on this point. It says, "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost." What does this mean, except that His conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His mother, was the occasion on which this wonderful "Incarnation" occurred? And the Bible seems really quite plain in its teaching about this matter.

However, as you see, there is no charge or protest against the Catholic Church about its teaching in this respect made by Protestants. The mass of them believe just as we do, that the Son of God became "incarnate"—that is, took human nature upon Himself in the womb of His Blessed Mother, at the time when the Angel Gabriel appeared to her, as narrated in the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel.

Now next as to the *Passion* of Christ. Of course this simply means His sufferings im-

mediately previous to and in connection with His death; specially His crucifixion. But what is the meaning of saying that we hold this as a *doctrine*? For it is simply a well-established fact of history, is it not? Very few, certainly, doubt it. Both Jews and pagans bore, and still bear, testimony to it.

The *doctrine*, then, of Christ's Passion and Death must be something different from the mere assertion of the fact that He suffered and died. And it is. The Catholic *doctrine* about it is not merely that Christ suffered and died, but that He suffered and died *for us*; that by His suffering and death He accomplished a most wonderful work, making by means of it satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and not only making *a* satisfaction, but making the *only* satisfaction which ever has been, or ever will be, made for our sins; so that it is in that suffering and death of His that all our hope must be placed. The Catholic doctrine of the Passion and Death of Christ is that Christ is our only Saviour and Redeemer; that, as St. Peter says (Acts iv. 12), "there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved."

Well, here again, what charge would Protestants in general want to make against the Catholic Church? Every Christian who believes that we need to be saved at all, believes

that we must be saved by Christ's sufferings and death.

You have been perhaps accustomed to believe; you have been told, it may be, from your childhood, that we Catholics, or "Romanists" as they sometimes call us, believe that it is our own good works that win heaven for us; that we put the merits of Christ quite into the background. But you see this is a great mistake. Christ is our Saviour, and there is no other which can take His place; this is nothing new which Martin Luther or any other Protestant brought to light; it has been the Catholic teaching from the beginning.

Next we have mention of the Resurrection of Christ. We perhaps need not say much about this, for though it is a miraculous event, in which we believe by faith, and not a simple matter of ordinary history, still the whole Christian world accepts it as a certainty. No Christian believes that Christ's body decayed like others in the tomb to which it was consigned, or even that it was stolen away to follow the laws of nature in any other place, or to be otherwise disposed of by His disciples. The practically universal belief of all who call themselves Christians is that, as recorded in all the gospels, Christ arose from the tomb in which His really dead body lay, on the Sunday morning following His crucifixion; and that he

arose to die no more, but to live in the flesh a glorious and immortal life.

They believe also that His risen body was not, as before, subject to pain, fatigue, or any of the ills of this life, and that it had qualities of a supernatural character, evident from the gospel narratives, which will be more fully explained when we come to speak of the resurrection of the dead. Here, then, the Catholic Church has no issue or trouble with any other Christian denominations, except with such who, while calling themselves Christians, reject the supernatural altogether from the life of Christ. We may, therefore, pass on, since, as has been said from the outset, we are not undertaking a formal defence of the Christian faith against other quite different religions, nor against infidelity and rationalism.

What have we next? “*The personal union of the two Natures, the divine and the human.*”

This concerns a point of what may be called accurate theology, about which in these days people do not generally trouble themselves much. And it is not a point of real controversy at present among those who believe in the Divinity of Christ, though many have no doubt quite loose and unsettled notions on the subject.

In the early days of the Church, however, there was a good deal of dispute about this matter.

Some held that there was a double personality in Christ; two really distinct persons, one Divine, the other human, under the same bodily form.

These were called Nestorians, from their leader, Nestorius, Archbishop of Constantinople. Their doctrine was condemned as false and heretical at the General Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, and it disappeared for the most part from the Church, though there are some who profess it even to this day among the Christians of the far East. You may have seen the name in the papers; their reunion with the Catholic Church was spoken of some time ago.

This doctrine having been condemned, some went too far in the other direction, and maintained that there was no human nature in Christ; that there was only *one* nature, as there was only *one* person. These were called Eutychians, from their leader Eutyches, a monk of Constantinople; or more significantly Monophysites, a Greek word signifying one nature (*monos*, one or single, and *physis*, nature). This belief was also declared to be contrary to the true faith in the General Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, and it never prevailed to any great extent subsequently; but as there are still some Nestorians, so also there are still some Monophysites. The Copts of Egypt are such.

But neither of these doctrines is formally

maintained by Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, in Europe or America. All among us who believe in Christ's Godhead or Divinity, whether they be Catholic or Protestant, believe that Christ was both God and man, in one single personality.

And indeed it is clear that, were it otherwise, His sufferings and death would not avail for our redemption, in the view of those who believe that redemption or atonement for our sins was needed. A merely human person could not suffice to make this atonement; on the other hand, a human nature was needed in order that suffering and death might be possible.

I think, then, that there are few so-called orthodox Protestants who will have any fault to find with the Catholic Church here; though such Protestants do not all see the consequences which naturally follow from this doctrine, as will be evident a little farther on.

The next article is: "*the divine Maternity of the most holy Mary, together with her most spotless Virginity.*" Here we come to what seems to be a point at issue; and we will give to it, and to the general teaching of the Church about the Blessed Virgin, a separate chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

WHAT, then, is meant by these words—
“*the divine Maternity of the most holy Mary*”?

It is meant that she is truly and properly called, as the Catholic Church calls her, the Mother of God. This title was definitely given to her by the Council of Ephesus, of which I have just spoken, and is given to her by all Catholics in the prayer which we call the “Hail Mary.” We say in that prayer: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.”

It is quite likely that you may object to this title, and be scandalized by it. But that is because you do not rightly understand what it means.

I remember seeing mention of it made in a Protestant catechism which I was once teaching in a Sunday-school. It spoke of this title as being a wrong one given by Romanists, and remarked that the Virgin Mary was “Christ’s mother only as to His human nature.”

This, of course, implied that “Romanists,” or Catholics, regarded her as the mother of the

Divine Nature. And this idea, I feel sure, is quite prevalent among Protestants about us.

And yet the notion is so absurd a one that it hardly seems to bear discussion. How could there be a Mother of the Divine Nature? Such an idea would at once make that Nature not Divine. For the Nature of God is necessarily self-existing, and from all eternity. It could not be Divine, and yet have a Mother. It would follow from this that we Catholics do not mean God when we use the word, and that the Blessed Virgin is our real God, if we have any at all, strictly speaking.

And such, I am afraid, is the idea that many Protestants have of us. If they would only examine, they would see how false it is; they would see that what we teach must be taught unless we wish to be Nestorians.

They would see that no woman could be a mother of a nature simply. Any mother is the mother of a *person*, not merely of a *nature*. The person has a nature of course, but it is not merely the nature which is born of the mother, but the person.

Very well then. The Blessed Virgin Mary was the Mother of Christ; that is granted by all. But Christ was a single person, having a Divine as well as a human nature; this is admitted by orthodox Protestants. And this person Christ is properly called Divine; that is

also plain enough; He is called simply God by Protestants themselves; His personality is Divine. The Blessed Virgin was the one who brought God into the world; and that is all that we mean by calling her the mother of God. The title was given, and is used, as a protest against the Nestorian heresy that there were two persons, one Divine and one human, and that only the human person was born into the world. Protestants need not worry themselves about it at all, for they hold just the same thing themselves.

It is, then, only in appearance that there is a point at issue here. But no doubt there is a real disagreement on some points about the Blessed Mother of God between Protestants and Catholics.

For one thing, Protestants do not seem to like to call her "blessed," as Catholics regularly do. This is really strange on their part, for we find right down in their own Bible (Luke i. 48) "from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." It is the same in ours too; and now I will just remark that in the quotations I have made thus far from the Bible I have used the Catholic version, and shall continue to do so, as a rule, and this for several reasons; first, because we believe it to be the best; secondly, that you may be quite sure that we have one in English; and thirdly, that you may see how little differ-

ence, on the whole, there is between it and the Protestant one.

What reason have Protestants for objecting to do what the Bible says all generations will do? It is really hard to see ; for even if the Mother of Christ was merely an ordinary woman like any other, certainly she was very fortunate and blessed in having for her Son the Redeemer of the world.

I can see no reason, unless that they want to keep her down, as it were ; it looks as if they thought there was some danger of her being more highly honored than her Son, and that some sort of repression was called for. To Catholics this idea would never occur ; we would not think of comparing the Blessed Virgin with God ; highly exalted as we believe her to be among creatures, the same infinite gap always remains in our minds between her and God that must necessarily be between the creature and the Creator.

Really this fear, this nervousness as it were, about a rivalry between the two, seems very amusing to us sometimes. I once knew a Protestant woman who on seeing a statue of the Blessed Virgin holding her Divine Infant in her arms, as she must so frequently have done, said that it "gave her a shiver to see the Virgin so large, and the Saviour so small"! Such a strange conceit could not occur to a Catholic.

Such representations only impress on us, as it seems that they naturally must upon all Christians, the immense condescension of God in becoming a little child for our sake, and the great dignity He was pleased to confer on His Mother, and similarly on His foster-father St. Joseph, in being, as the Scripture says, "subject to them" (Luke ii. 51).

But of course there is some difference between the Catholic and Protestant teachings with regard to the Blessed Virgin, as I have said. Protestants, as a rule, I think, do regard her as simply in herself nothing but an ordinary woman; a good, pious, and holy woman, certainly; I hardly think they doubt that; but still not in any way specially or distinctly superior to many others. I suppose they would all agree that she is in heaven; but they do not look upon her as occupying any special or exalted place there.

The reason, probably, for this really peculiar opinion of theirs—for it is peculiar, the Greek and all the Oriental churches having the Catholic view about her—is that they do not attach any weight to anything that is not right down in the text of the Bible. Sometimes, as in the instance I gave a little while ago, it really seems as if they did not notice very much some things that are in that text; but at any rate, they do not go beyond it. This is in it-

self unreasonable ; it is something the same as if we admitted no evidence about the great men who founded our government except what could be obtained from the study of the Constitution. But this point has already been sufficiently discussed ; and I trust you have seen that the Catholic belief that other evidence on doctrinal points is admissible is reasonable enough, to say the least.

Admitting such evidence, it is plain enough that the Blessed Virgin did occupy in the mind of the Church a peculiar and separate position from that of other saints and holy persons, from the first ages of Christianity. We find as strong things said about her when the Church came out of the pressure of persecution, and had a chance to fully publish her doctrine, as now. We find it constantly maintained that she was not only good, but even sinless ; and surely, though Protestants may not see how this can be established, at least none urge anything against it, or bring in any way against her any definite charge or blame of any kind ; and many of them even admit it, though not as a matter of absolute belief or certainty.

Then, again, there is a constant tradition that she was after her death taken bodily away from this world ; that as our Divine Lord ascended corporally into heaven, so His Blessed Mother was taken up, or assumed there. This

event is celebrated in the feast of the Assumption, as we call it. And I would like to call your attention to the probability of this, from the fact that no one ever pretended to collect any relics of the Blessed Virgin, except of such a nature that she might have parted with them during life, and that no one has claimed or now claims that her body actually rests anywhere on earth. Such claims would undoubtedly have been made; had it been possible to make them; for no one can suppose that the actual tomb of the body of one so intimately related to Christ would have been neglected by Christians, or that they would not have collected what souvenirs were attainable of one who must have been so dear to Him and to them.

To say that her remains were hid away, as the Jews pretended that those of Christ were, would merely be saying that Romanism began very early, and was indeed identified with Christianity itself. But such an idea, either with regard to our Divine Lord or to His Blessed Mother, is really unreasonable; no secret of such importance could be so well kept.

However, it is not necessary to argue further to prove this point, or even to show that it is not improbable; for it has never been defined as an article of Catholic faith, though it is universally believed by Catholics.

The other matter which is given in the pro-

profession of faith which we are examining is the spotless or absolute Virginity of Mary. This is generally conceded by Christians, as all call her Virgin, though all do not prefix the title Blessed. The only questions which could well be raised about it would be as to whether Christ Himself was the son of Joseph, and whether He had any brothers or sisters, in the sense in which we would use the word. Both these ideas are rejected by orthodox Protestants, the brothers or sisters mentioned in the Gospel being understood to be merely near relatives. The Catholic faith, therefore, presents no more difficulties in this matter than that of Protestants in general.

There is another matter of faith, however, with regard to the Blessed Virgin Mary which should be explained, as it has been much misunderstood, and is of considerable importance. It has been often mentioned in these last few decades, especially since its solemn definition as an article of faith by Pius IX. in 1854, and you have probably often heard of it. It is what is known as the Immaculate Conception; and on account of the special interest attaching to it, we will make it the subject of a special chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

THE particular dogma of the Church which we are about to consider seems to furnish a specially good illustration of a fact evident enough to Catholics; that is, that most of the objections made by Protestants to our religion come from their not understanding what that religion really teaches. It is quite plain that hardly any of the objectors to the Immaculate Conception have any idea of what is meant by the words.

Some seem to think that it refers to the supernatural conception of our Divine Lord in the womb of His Blessed Mother; and it seems certainly strange that with this notion they should object to it, for this doctrine is plainly laid down in the Apostles' Creed, which almost all Christians profess, in the words, "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost." It is also clearly taught in the Bible itself (Luke ii. 35).

Others, again, see in it a sort of deification of the Blessed Virgin herself; they think that it means to say that she is in some way equal to God; though why they should entertain this idea seems to us quite strange. It is only to be

accounted for by their having that notion firmly fixed in their minds already, so that anything which appears to point in that direction tends to increase or intensify that conviction.

Others still, paying somewhat closer attention to the words as they stand, gather from them the meaning that the Church regards the conception of Mary as supernatural in the same sense in which that of her Divine Son was ; that we believe that she too was "conceived by the Holy Ghost." They think, then, that if it does not mean that she was actually divine, it certainly must mean that she is in some way more than human ; a goddess in some sense, though not perhaps equal to God Himself.

How strange it is that they will never take the trouble to inquire of some one who really knows what this doctrine is, or to get some book which would give them information. If they would do so, they would find, very likely, that their objections would disappear ; at any rate, it would seem to them a small addition to what they are already willing enough to accept.

What, then, is this doctrine ? In the first place, it is not any raising of the Mother of God above the plane of human nature. The Church *does not* mean by the words "Immaculate Conception" that Mary was conceived by the Holy Ghost ; on the contrary, she teaches that she was conceived and born of human parents ; her

father's name is believed to have been Joachim, her mother's Anna. All that is meant is that she was not only from the time of her birth, but from the moment of her conception, a perfectly innocent or sinless child.

That is no more than what many Christians believe is the case with every child that comes into this world. And of course the Church thinks so too, if by sin is meant actual sin; that is to say, sin actually committed by thought, word, or deed. For it is plain that no child can commit sin before coming to an age when it becomes aware of the difference between right and wrong; the age of reason, as we commonly call it.

But there is another thing which is known as sin, besides that which is actually committed; it is what is called *original* sin, and this also is believed in by orthodox Protestants as well as by Catholics. What is meant by it is this: that Adam in his sin, as narrated in the book of Genesis, lost the right to heaven; and that from that time—that is, from the very beginning of our race—his descendants have also lost that title to heaven. A Redeemer, however, was promised immediately after Adam's sin, who was to restore the right to heaven which had been lost; and Christians generally acknowledge that it will be restored to those who believe in Him. Furthermore, Catholics and

many Protestants believe that it is restored even to infants incapable of belief by their being baptized.

Now, what the Church teaches with regard to the Blessed Virgin is simply this : that to her, by a special privilege, on account of her having been selected as the Mother of the Redeemer, this right to heaven was restored even before her birth, at the very instant of her conception ; that what we call the stain of original sin never was upon her. That is what the word "immaculate" means. *Macula*, in Latin, means a stain or spot ; "immaculate," then, means free from stain ; and to say "Immaculate Conception" simply means, then, that her human nature was free at its very conception from this stain or spot of sin, being in that respect like that of her Divine Son. But this does not for a moment imply that she had any Divine Nature, as her Son had ; nor does any Catholic dream of understanding it in that way.

Now, what objection can possibly attach to this, except that no positive proof of it may appear ? No reason can be stated why it should not have been so ; there is no impiety or idolatry in it. Of course, if one is to take nothing as belonging to the Christian faith but what is *plainly or unquestionably* stated in the Bible, one will not believe or accept it ; but if one will leave this, which I think has been fairly shown

in what precedes to be unreasonable ground, there is hardly anything in which the consent of the Christian world previous to the Protestant Reformation, or since that outside of the influence of that Reformation, has been more unanimous. The Greek and other Oriental churches do not formally state it ; but it is quite safe to say that their members would not and do not reject it, for the devotion to the Blessed Virgin has been, if anything, greater with them than even in the Roman Church. And the question about it among Catholics, which did exist before the solemn definition in 1854, was not so much whether it was a true doctrine, but rather whether it was a matter, properly speaking, of the faith ; or whether the original stain did not rest for an instant, as it were, on Mary, being removed the instant afterward ; attaching to her, as we may say, purely as a matter of form. These doubts were not very grave ones, and all were probably glad to have them removed.

Try, then, to clear away the prejudices and imaginations which you may have entertained about this very simple matter, and if you do not agree with us and the great majority of Christendom about it, do not think that we are idolaters because we think as we do.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

THE next article which we find in our profession is as follows: "*the true, real, and substantial presence of the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.*"

In this we have the statement of one of the great mysteries of the faith; one which, as I have said, was in the beginning kept a profound secret, so far as possible, from the world outside the Christian pale, and only communicated to those who had been received into it. At present, and for a long time past, the discipline has been different; it is now explained, as far as it can be, to all who desire to know it; and yet very many, as did the Jews in the time of our Lord Himself, misunderstand and misrepresent it.

Perhaps this is not so much to be wondered at; for it is, of course, a matter impossible for us here to thoroughly understand. But that should only dispose us to try to understand it better; for that it is taught by our blessed Lord Himself quite explicitly, cannot be denied.

Please turn in your Bible to the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. I will quote here from your own version, for that you will not gainsay. We read in verse 51 : "I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The Jews who heard Him, as I have said, misunderstood this, and were shocked at it. They said (v. 52), "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Now, Protestants generally say that our Lord only meant this figuratively ; that He did not mean that any one was to receive Him substantially, but only to commune with Him in a spiritual manner. And indeed we agree that it is only the spiritual union with Him that is of use ; the merely material or corporal reception of His body would be of no avail, as we read below (v. 63). But if there was, after all, to be no actual reception of Him corporally, He could easily have removed all their objections by saying at once that a spiritual communion was all that was intended. But instead of this, He goes on (v. 53) : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." If what He had said was merely a metaphor, why not explain it away ; but no, He

goes on to state it even more strongly than before.

Why should He do this, if not to show unmistakably that there really was to be a mysterious substantial reception of Him, imparting great spiritual blessings which could not otherwise be received ; having for its object these spiritual blessings, but requiring this means for their attainment? And, if his hearers had all accepted all that Protestants say was meant—and certainly any one who believed in Him even as a good and holy man might do that, there being now no other mystery than this definitely proposed as a test of their faith—why should He say, “there are some of you that believe not” (v. 64)? And why should some of them actually “go back and walk no more with him” (v. 66) except that they, like Protestants, felt that this mystery about the reception of His flesh and blood was something too hard for them to accept? It could hardly have been the allusion to His death or to His ascension which drove them away. These were not the points against which they had protested.

But after all, we must not get into controversy. I only want to call your attention to this matter, and have you think of it yourselves.

We all know that this mystery was afterward still more solemnly proclaimed by our Saviour when, at the Last Supper, He took bread, as all

the evangelists except St. John record, and said, "This is my body," and wine, saying, "This is my blood," and told them to receive these, and to continue to do what He had then done, in remembrance of Him.

Here again, of course, I know it is said that His words were only to be taken in a spiritual sense; that He meant "This represents my body, or my blood," and nothing more.

Perhaps; but if so, is it not rather strange that He should have allowed them to misunderstand Him, as they seem certainly to have done? Even if it is claimed that the Apostles and first Christians had the present views of Protestants about this matter, it must be conceded that the words of Christ were understood literally very soon afterward; that this literal sense is brought forward and insisted on repeatedly by the Christian writers of early times, and that there is no trace of any protest against it up to the times of the Reformation. Christendom seems to have been more singularly in accord about this matter than about any other; the quarrels and controversies of the growing Church did not concern it; all agreed and took for granted that Christ was really present in the Holy Communion, or Eucharist, of which all partook; that the consecrated bread and wine became indeed and in truth His Body and His Blood.

It seems hardly credible that Almighty God should have allowed such a gigantic delusion to fasten itself on the Church in its very cradle, and to remain in it for fifteen centuries, inducing all Christians to the worship of bread and wine. One word from Christ Himself at the beginning would so easily have stopped it ; and afterward some one, at least, could have been raised up by the Holy Spirit to protest against it.

But so far was this from being the case that even Luther himself, the great apostle of the Reformation, believed in it as firmly as any one else, as did also many others who protested against Rome. Zwingli, however, does raise his voice against it ; but his doctrine is looked on with horror by his fellow-Reformers, so deeply has the belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the consecrated elements become embedded in the very structure of Christianity.

It is true that doubts in a certain way had been raised about this matter about three centuries previous, principally by Berengarius. But these doubts did not concern the Real Presence itself, but rather the way in which the Church held this doctrine. There were doubts about what is called "transubstantiation" (what this is will soon be explained) ; but they never took any real hold on the belief of the faithful, and were repudiated later even by Berengarius himself.

It is time now that we should understand more clearly just what the Catholic faith does teach on this head.

It is, then, that Christ not only in the Last Supper made Himself really and truly present in what He gave to His Apostles at that time, when He said "Take, eat; this is my body," and "Drink ye all of it; this is my blood of the new testament" (Matt. xxvi. 26-28, and similarly Mark xiv. 23-24 and Luke xxii. 19-20), but that He also empowered them to repeat the same thing which He had done, as indeed distinctly stated by St. Luke, "this do in remembrance of me" (xxii. 19).

That this rite has been celebrated from the very foundation of Christianity is unquestionable; and in fact all Protestant denominations have retained it. It has also been generally, indeed almost universally, allowed that a qualified minister of some sort was needed for this sacred rite; that it was not a thing to be undertaken by any believer in general. So it is plain that Christians have never held that this was something to be done only by the Apostles themselves, during their lifetime; but that there were to be others to whom this office should be transmitted.

The Catholic faith holds that those who have succeeded in this respect to the office of the Apostles are the bishops and priests of the

Church. To perform this rite has been always regarded as the principal essential office of the priest.

He performs it in what is manifestly the principal service of the Catholic Church; what we call the Mass; this corresponds to what Protestant denominations generally call the Communion service.

The Mass consists first of various prayers, with the reading of a part of one of the Epistles, and of one of the Gospels of the New Testament. This portion varies according to the day of the ecclesiastical calendar, or the feast which is being celebrated. Then follows the offering of the bread and wine which are to be consecrated; and then comes the more solemn part of the service, in which the consecration of the bread and the wine is made, using the same words which Christ Himself used at the Last Supper, as recorded in the Gospels. The consecrated elements are elevated for a moment for the adoration of the people; then follow some other prayers, after which the priest receives Communion, which is afterward distributed to such of those present as may come forward for it. After a few more prayers, and the blessing of the priest given to those present, the ceremony is concluded.

Now what do we hold is accomplished by the consecration? We hold that the substance of

the bread and wine which has been offered passes away, though the qualities, or "accidents" as they are called, remain, such, for example, as the shape, color, taste, etc. For the substance of the bread is substituted that of the Body of Christ; for the substance of the wine, that of His Blood.

To explain accurately what is meant by substance would require some knowledge of metaphysics; but I think every one can see that there is such a thing, and that it is different from the form which this substance may assume. When the substance takes a new form, we call the change *transformation*; when the substance itself changes, the form remaining the same, it is naturally called *transubstantiation*.

I have said that Luther himself taught that Christ was really present in the consecrated elements; the divergence of his doctrine from that of the Church was that he maintained that the substance of the bread and wine remained *together with* that of the Body and Blood of Christ. His doctrine was therefore known as *consubstantiation*. But both agreed, you see, as to the Real Presence of Christ.

The Church further teaches that the Real Presence of Christ remains as long as the form remains uncorrupted; when, however, that becomes changed—as, for instance, if the taste

of the consecrated wine should become sour, so that it would no longer be considered as wine but as vinegar—the Real Presence would no longer remain. But as the form does always remain unchanged for a considerable time, unless the elements are received in Communion, it is clear that we cannot do otherwise than recognize the Real Presence of Christ in them by the same signs of adoration which we should give to Christ if He were visibly present.

Now, in this it may be said we are mistaken ; that the Real Presence of Christ is not in this which appears to be bread and wine, any more than it is anywhere else. But it cannot be justly said that we are idolaters by any one who believes in the Divinity of Christ, any more than it could be said that we were if we paid this honor to Him when concealed in any other way. If He were here with His bodily form as He was during His earthly life, we should be justified, nay required, to pay Him this honor and worship under whatever disguise He might choose to conceal Himself, if we believed He was really there ; and it is exactly the same in this case.

You will easily see that there are great mysteries attached to this doctrine, especially that of the Real Presence existing in so many places at once ; do not imagine that we do not see these difficulties, though Catholic philoso-

phy does much to remove them. But so there are inscrutable mysteries connected with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, Three Persons in One God. But the mystery exists because the doctrine is beyond our reason, not because it is contrary to it.

For it must not be imagined with regard to this doctrine of the Real Presence that it is opposed to any of the conclusions of science; with regard to the constitution of material things, for instance. We accept without difficulty all that science has really established about this, though all scientific men will acknowledge that most of what they have to say about this is of the nature of hypothesis, not of discovered truth. And there is really no possibility of any physical inquiries ever clashing with the faith in this matter. For the notion of substance is not a physical, but a metaphysical one, independent of physical researches.

We may then dismiss all such fears. The only point we have really to consider is whether this teaching is historically identified with the Christian teaching itself; and, as has been said, only one answer can be given to this question. If any doctrine was held clearly and persistently from the earliest ages down to the time of the Reformation, it is this; and if a different doctrine had been held by the Apostles and their immediate followers, it would have been as

utterly impossible to introduce a tremendous innovation like this without protest of which we should now have some record, as it would be to introduce this doctrine now into some Protestant denomination without exciting controversy. There is, then, no alternative between accepting it and denying that anything definite in the way of Christian faith was handed down at all by the Apostles to those who listened to their teaching; and I am presuming all along that you do not hold this latter view.

It is also most clearly taught in the Bible itself, as we have seen; more clearly, indeed, than the doctrine of the Holy Trinity itself.

It remains to say a few words on another aspect which the Mass has in the mind of the Catholic Church.

We read in the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (xi. 26), "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." These words are, as it were, an explanation of those of Christ Himself in which He says that this is to be done in remembrance of Him. In remembrance, that is, not merely in a general or affectionate way, but in remembrance of His great work, the shedding of His Blood on the cross for our sins.

It is this that is signified by the double form under which the consecration is made. The bread, as even Protestants hold, represents His

Body ; the wine, His Blood, separated or shed from His Body.

Now, the Catholic Church holds that though by the consecrating words Christ's Body is really present in the form of bread, and His Blood in that of wine, still they cannot now be actually separated. St. Paul tells us : " Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over Him." His Blood cannot be really shed again. Where His Body is, then, there is His Blood ; where His Blood is, there is His Body. So under each form or species Christ is wholly present, living, and both God and man ; as our profession says, " the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity " ; not each by itself separately, but all together.

Nevertheless by the outward sign of separation furnished by the double form or appearance, His sacrifice and Blood-shedding on the Cross is represented ; and thus we hold that in the Mass, His Sacrifice made once for all upon the Cross is represented and offered in a specially efficacious way. This is the great sacrificial service of the New Law, foretold by the Prophet Malachi (i. 11) : " From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." This sacrifice is

also foreshadowed in that of Melchisedech, who "brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God" (Gen. xiv. 18); and St. Paul says (Heb. xiii. 10): "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Remember this is not a new sacrifice, different from that of Christ; that is the one sacrifice, which those of the Jews represented, and which alone has power to atone for our sins. It is the commemoration and the offering of that one sacrifice which we have in the Mass; and it is for that reason that the Church attaches such great importance to it.

Now one thing more. You know, perhaps, that in Communion, whether received at Mass or at some other time, lay people with us do not partake of the cup or chalice, but receive only under the form of bread. Protestants complain that this is only receiving half of the Communion to which they are entitled; but it is clear from what was said a little while ago that Christ must necessarily be entirely received under each kind, as He must be really present in each, it not being possible that He should be divided. There is, then, nothing more to be received by taking both, and to consider it necessary to give or receive both would imply a doubt as to the full presence of Christ in each. The matter, then, is not important in this respect, as long as

the Death of Christ is fully represented by the consumption of both when Mass is said; and for this purpose both species are received by the priest. But this is not a personal privilege; should he receive when not himself saying Mass, he receives, like the laity, the form of bread alone.

The matter is one of discipline; and the rule had to be made as it now stands, on account of the impossibility of the large numbers of people who go to Communion in the Catholic Church receiving the form of wine without danger of spilling, or of contamination in passing from mouth to mouth.

Perhaps you think, by the way, that there are not so many people after all who do go to Communion in the Catholic Church. This is because you do not go early enough to the church to see them. Few go at a late Mass, because we have a law that one must take no food or drink at all from midnight till the time of receiving. This law is made for the sake of due reverence. So all that can do so naturally go to Communion early. Go to a Catholic church at six or seven o'clock of a Sunday morning, and you will see quite enough to satisfy you.

CHAPTER X.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

OUR next article is: "The seven Sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind; that is to say, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, Matrimony."

The principal difference between the Catholic doctrine and that of Protestants on the point here proposed is that we admit seven sacraments, while they usually admit two, and only two; namely, Baptism and Eucharist or Holy Communion, if indeed they have not come to regard these as merely appropriate ceremonies, in spite of what our Lord says, Mark xvi. 16 and John vi. 54. And yet sometimes they are not very clear about this. In the Episcopal catechism, found in the Book of Common Prayer, we find as an answer to the question how many sacraments there are, "Two only, as generally necessary to salvation." That, you see, is entirely non-committal. Being necessary to salvation really has nothing to do with the essence of a sacrament. It is possible to be saved without any sacrament at all; otherwise no one could have been saved before the

sacraments were instituted by Christ. And even now it is possible to be saved without any of the sacraments; even Baptism itself is not absolutely necessary; for one who knows nothing about it, or has no one to baptize him, can be saved if he has perfect sorrow for sin, and turns to God with his whole heart, desiring and purposing to do all things which He has commanded.

What, then, is the idea of a sacrament, or what is its true definition? It is a rite or ceremony permanently instituted by Christ, for the purpose of signifying some grace from God, and conferring that grace on the soul. The first question, then, as to whether some rite or ceremony is a sacrament, is whether it was ordained by Christ; the second, whether it was instituted to signify some special grace, and to confer that grace on all receiving it.

Now, Protestants, on account of the principle which they generally hold that no certain information can be obtained as to what Christ did except from the Scripture, have evidently exposed themselves to the risk of missing some of the sacraments. And though the grace which the lost sacraments confer may not be one necessary to salvation, still it would be a pity to lose it, all the same. So it would be well, in this matter especially, to be pretty sure that there is no source outside the Bible from

which we can get information as to what Christ established to be done in His Church for the spiritual benefit of those in it, or those desiring to come in.

It may be remarked, however, that it seems pretty clear that on the authority of Scripture alone at least two sacraments more should be admitted. For we read (John xx. 22, 23): "When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Now, here is a definite institution by Christ of a great grace which His disciples—those, that is, who were present on this occasion—were to confer on others, namely, the forgiveness of their sins; and also there is an institution by Him of a certain class of persons to exercise this power, or to confer this grace, by which they were set apart from the rest of the Christian community.

It would seem, then, plainly here that we have the Sacrament of Penance, or of the absolution of sin by human ministers; and also that of Order, or the setting apart of a certain order or class of persons among His followers who were to confer the Sacrament of Penance. And there is also full as much evidence from the text of the Bible that this was to be a permanent Christian institution as there is for the Sacrament of

Baptism. For that, too, when He committed it to His Apostles (Matt. xxviii. 19), "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," was given, as it stands, merely as a personal charge; He did not say that others were to do it after them. He said, it is true, that He would always be with them, even to the end of the world (v. 20); but it would be giving a strange sense to these words to suppose that they only applied to the offices of baptizing and teaching; and as nothing similar is recorded in connection with the Holy Communion, the want of it would imply that that also was only a temporary institution.

Another contradiction shows itself in the doctrine of Protestants in their not admitting the washing of the feet (recorded by St. John xiii. 3-15) as a sacrament; for on the authority of Scripture alone it has as definite a blessing or grace attached to it, and is as distinctly enjoined by Christ, as Baptism or Holy Communion. For He said to Peter (v. 8): "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me," and He says (v. 14): "If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet."

On the face, then, of Scripture, this washing of the feet is a matter seemingly of great importance, conferring a great blessing, and cer-

tainly established by Christ ; and yet Protestants have no ceremony of the kind, though it exists in the Catholic Church, being one of the ceremonies of Holy Week. Catholics, however, do not regard it as a sacrament ; but there is no way of deciding that it is not so, unless we are willing to be guided by something besides the mere text of Scripture itself.

And, in point of fact, Protestants have been so guided. They did not take this to be a sacrament, and why ? Simply because there was no evidence that it had ever been so regarded in the Church. If, then, they were so willing to take the Church's decision against this being a sacrament, though the Bible seems to say that it is, why not also accept the decision of the Church that Confirmation, evidently practised by the Apostles (Acts viii. 14-17 and xix. 2-6), and Extreme Unction (described by St. James v. 14-15) are sacraments instituted by Christ, though the Scripture does not say that they were ?

It would seem that we are, in this matter at least, in a manner forced to leave the purely Scriptural ground on which Protestants claim to stand, and follow the more reasonable course of admitting other evidence as well ; and if we do so, we find at once that the seven Sacraments above named have been accepted from the earliest ages of Christianity from which we can

collect evidence ; that they are accepted by all the Christian churches through the world except those formed at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Why, then, have such difficulty about accepting them? There is nothing idolatrous or superstitious in the idea of them, unless there be also in Baptism and Holy Communion.

Of the Sacrament of Penance I shall have something to say later, as this matter is much misunderstood by Protestants, and notions are entertained by them about it which would certainly imply great reproach to the Church if they were only true. Some remarks will also be made about some of the others, especially in stating the Catholic doctrine relating to marriage or matrimony. At present it suffices to state what we believe to be the graces attached to these seven Sacraments, as we hold them. These graces, then, are:

1. For Baptism, by which one becomes a Christian, to remit all sin, original and actual, and the penalty of sin, to enlighten the mind, to diminish concupiscence or the desire for sin, and to make the soul fruitful of good works.

2. For Confirmation, to strengthen Christians to profess and maintain their faith courageously.

3. For the Eucharist, to nourish the Christian life, to increase grace, to produce a distaste for merely worldly things, and to draw the soul to union with God.

4. For Penance, to remit sins committed after Baptism, and to give strength for avoiding sin, and persevering in a good life.

5. For Extreme Unction, to remove the remains of sin, to relieve the souls of the sick, to increase confidence in God, to give strength to resist temptation, and to enable illness to be supported with patience; and sometimes to cure the disease and restore health, if it be God's will.

6. For Order, to make the ministers of Christ fit for their sacred duties, to perform them with due piety. This sacrament has various degrees; those ordained are bishops, priests, and deacons. The priest has the power, by this sacrament, of consecrating the Eucharist, and of absolving sins; besides this, the bishop has those of giving the sacrament of Confirmation, and of ordaining priests, and consecrating priests to be bishops.

7. For Matrimony, to restrain inordinate concupiscence, to give strength to bear the burdens of married life, to keep conjugal fidelity, and to bring up children religiously and well.

These, then, are the seven Sacraments, honored and accepted by the Catholic Church, and in constant use within her pale. Can it be said that, if they really are what she claims them to be, they are anything but great blessings and mercies of God? If indeed the Church taught that the gifts which they bestow

could be obtained without any proper dispositions on the part of the recipient; that the forgiveness of sin could be obtained, for instance, in the Sacrament of Penance, without any sorrow for sin or purpose of avoiding it; then indeed they would encourage Christians to neglect virtue, and trust to the sacraments simply as a means of escaping the consequences of the sins they might commit.

But, in point of fact, the Church most distinctly teaches, and Catholics know very well, that to obtain the blessings or graces of the majority of them, it is necessary to be, before attempting to receive them, in what is called the state of grace; that is to say, that one's sins must have been already forgiven, that one must be leading a good life, avoiding sin most carefully, and loving God with one's whole heart; and that to approach them while living a sinful life, to receive Communion, for example, while still attached to sin and willing to commit it, would not only utterly deprive the sacrament of any blessing for the recipient, but would make his act in receiving it a frightful sin of sacrilege; that is, it would be a profanation of most sacred things; as we read in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians (xi. 29): "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord."

For Christians even to marry without being in the state of grace is, therefore, regarded by the Church as a mortal sin of sacrilege; and to avoid this they are required to go to Confession before the wedding.

For the two sacraments, Baptism and Penance, which are intended for the forgiveness of sin, it is not expected, of course, that one's sins will be forgiven before approaching them. But it is expected and required that if these sacraments are to produce the effect of the forgiveness of actual sin, that sin must be repented of, and a firm determination made to avoid it for the future.

A word may be said about the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. As you see by what has been said above, the effect of this, as far as sin is concerned, is to remove, not sin itself but its remains; for though sin is forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance, so that the sinner passes into the state of grace or the love of God, still his soul is not restored to quite the same condition, unless he have extraordinary penitence, that it would have been in had he not sinned.

You may, however, have noticed that the priest does not hesitate to give this Sacrament, or, as we say, to anoint, in cases where Catholics even of rather careless lives are struck down by some accident or sudden disease, depriving them of their senses. The explanation

of this is, that where the Sacrament of Penance is impossible, it is held that this takes its place; but here, as for Penance itself, it is not considered to have any effect unless the sinner has interiorly made an act of true sorrow or repentance, which is necessarily accompanied by the purpose of abandoning sin for the future.

In short, we do not hold that the sacraments have the effect of converting sinners or restoring them to the state of grace and the favor of God *without their own co-operation by a thorough and hearty repentance.*

But, it may be asked, what is the use of these sacraments which confer the pardon of sin if they require repentance also? With regard to Baptism, I will say now that it takes away original sin, which has been already explained, even from infants, and from idiots who have always been incapable of making a rational act; and furthermore that it is by Baptism that we become Christians and capable of receiving the other sacraments, which are offered only to the baptized. There is, however, more to be said on this matter; and it will be said when I come to speak more specially about the subject of confession, later on.

CHAPTER XI.

PURGATORY.

EVERYBODY knows that Catholics believe in purgatory, but few outside the Church seem to have a clear notion of what we mean by it. Many apparently think that we believe that all Catholics are saved, but that they all, except perhaps the priests, have to go to purgatory, out of which the priest will get them by his prayers, or by ceremonies of some sort, if he is only paid enough money for doing so.

Now try to put yourself in our place for a moment. Think how you would feel if we made these sweeping charges against you. Is it possible that any one who recognizes the principles of morality, and who has common sense, could believe that a man or woman can be saved by simply professing the Catholic faith? I am sorry to say that it is a matter of history that Luther and the original Protestants who followed him did hold that we are saved by faith alone, and that the more we sin, the more we glorify this saving faith; and this idea, nominally, exists at the present day among those who have inherited the first creeds of the Reformation. But still all practically acknowl-

edge that to give proof of being a Christian indeed, one should live a good life ; that this is the natural result of saving faith. And Catholics have always held this more formally and distinctly, teaching, as the Bible teaches, that nothing defiled can enter heaven ; and hence, of course, that if a Catholic, no matter how strong his faith may be, commits mortal sin, and dies without sincerely repenting of it, he goes infallibly to hell. The principal practical difference between us and you is that we are more strict as to what constitutes mortal or grievous sin ; for instance, we believe that to give way, even internally, to a lustful imagination or desire, is a grievous sin, deserving of hell for all eternity.

It is plain, then, that we cannot believe that all Catholics are saved ; for unfortunately it is not only too probable, but even we may say certain, that many of them are suddenly cut off in sin, or die without truly repenting and purposing to amend it.

And think of the grossness of the charge that your notions involve against your fellow-citizens. How would you feel if you were a priest, and were told that you undertook to get every one for whom application was made out of purgatory (whatever that may be) for a money consideration, and that (as is often said) you worked on the feelings of poor and ignorant

people, perhaps even preaching what you did not yourself believe, in order to extort money from them?

Try at least to remember that a priest is not a mysterious being, evolved somehow out of the depths of what you call the dark ages; but that he is a man of at any rate a fairly decent character in society, against whom grave charges of immorality in general are seldom established; and see if it is quite fair to accuse him without any real proof of intolerable meanness, tyranny, and imposition such as this would be. And if you are not acquainted with any priests, and have a general idea, such as unfortunately those of our Anglo-Saxon race, so called, are rather apt to have, that foreigners are capable of all sorts of villany, and that priests are mostly foreigners, or Irishmen at any rate, I would suggest to you that not a few of them are, like the writer of these pages, as much of what you would call pure American descent and family as you are yourself, and have perhaps been as strong Protestants as you are now.

Then try to give up all this nonsense, handed down to you from the dark ages of ignorance about the Catholic faith in which your fathers lived, and just listen to a little truth about it from one who has had ideas like yours, but now knows what he is talking about.

Well, then, the fact is, that we believe that

the Catholic who loves God and his neighbor is saved, and that the Catholic who commits a grievous sin, and dies without true repentance, is damned. But we believe that Catholics who are saved, and are sure therefore of heaven in the end, do not necessarily enter on it immediately. For there are sins which are not grievous or mortal. Such sins we call venial. I hardly think you would seriously believe that a boy who stole an apple from an orchard or from a grocery store would be condemned to hell for it; on the other hand, you do believe that a murderer or an adulterer dying impenitent would, no matter if he did have faith in Christ. For dying impenitent would mean that he did not care about the offence to God in his murder or adultery, and was ready to commit more if it suited his convenience. This distinction between mortal and venial sins is then simply common sense. Of course we cannot always decide whether a sin is mortal or venial, but that there is a difference between the two is plain.

Now, it is on account of these venial sins that we believe most of those who are saved do not enter heaven immediately. For though they are venial or comparatively easy to be forgiven (for that is what the word "venial" means), still they are sins, and they defile the soul; and as we have seen, nothing defiled can enter

heaven. The soul with the taint of sin on it, however slight, cannot see the face of God. It must be purified first, and there is nothing like suffering patiently borne to purify a soul. This we cannot help seeing, even in this world.

Now, purgatory means a state of purification or purging from sin by suffering; it is, then, entirely reasonable that the soul not as yet thoroughly purified in this world should be in purgatory for a time, till this purification is accomplished.

But in order that this doctrine may be more thoroughly understood, I must explain to you the Catholic teaching about satisfaction for sin. I shall begin a little way back, and come gradually to it.

Perhaps you imagine—I think most Protestants do—that we Catholics believe that we can atone or satisfy for sin simply by doing some good works, such as almsgiving, or by punishing ourselves for it, as by fasting or abstinence from meat. I have, however, already told you that this is not the case; that we believe, just as much as any Protestant does, that Christ's Passion and Death is the only thing that can satisfy for our sins. We have faith in Christ as our Redeemer, and our sole Redeemer, just as much as any Protestant has; and what is more, every Catholic that has an atom of the instruction which we endeavor to give to all, knows

and understands this fully from his childhood. We do not, then, believe that we are saved by our own good works, but by the merits of Christ ; but we also believe that we *cannot avail ourselves* of those merits of Christ unless we have besides faith, also what St. Paul, and the Church after him, call *charity*.

Now, what is this charity of which St. Paul speaks, and of which he says most distinctly that it is greater than even faith itself? “ Now there remain,” he says (1 Cor. xiii. 13), “ faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greater of these is charity.”

It evidently is not almsgiving simply and by itself, which is what we generally understand in English by charity ; for he says in this chapter (v. 3) : “ If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

There is no real doubt about the meaning of this word. The Latin word “ *caritas*,” from which charity comes, means simply what we may call for the moment dearness ; that is to say the virtue by which God and our neighbor become dear to us ; or, in other words, the love of God and of our neighbor, which is enjoined on us by Christ Himself as the sum and substance of the whole law. We read (Luke x. 27) that the young man in answer to Christ’s question, “ What is written in the law ? ”

answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself"; and we read immediately afterward that Christ told him he had answered right.

Faith, then, without charity, or the love of God, from which the love of our neighbor necessarily follows—for St. John says (I. iv. 20): "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar"—is, according to the plain teaching of St. Paul as given above, unprofitable, or insufficient for salvation. The same doctrine is taught most clearly by St. James (ii. 17): "So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself"; or as the Protestant version has it, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." No wonder that Luther objected to this epistle of St. James, and called it an "epistle of straw"; but St. Paul, you see, teaches just the same thing. St. James, however, develops it more fully (ii. 14-26).

It is, then, most certain that faith alone will not save us; we must also have the love of God, and this love of God, unless it show itself by good works, is false. St. John says (I. iii. 16-18, and I quote your own version): "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down

our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

Now, the question arises: Are these good works which must necessarily show themselves in our lives, if we have the love of God in us which is needed for salvation, of any use to us? Is the Christian who abounds in them any more pleasing to God than he who has only a few?

It would seem that there can be only one answer to this. If our love for God pleases Him, and is needed that we may see His face in heaven, the more of it we have the more we shall please Him; and each good work that we do under the influence of it will please Him; and will obtain for itself a special reward. He Himself teaches this most clearly: "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

After this, it hardly seems necessary to multiply texts. All our good works done with faith and the love of God, are each and individually to receive a reward from Him; and it is perfectly well understood that our claim to this reward rests primarily on the merits of Christ.

But now still another question comes, which is the real one with which we are specially concerned just now. And that is, do our good works, besides receiving a reward in heaven, and perhaps even also here, avail in any way to *undo the effect of our sins*? Do they offer, in other words, any *satisfaction* for them?

Of course it is plain from what I have said that they cannot thus avail, according to our doctrine, *in themselves*, except so far as they may incline God, and indeed do certainly incline Him, to bring us to Christ by faith, so that His Precious Blood, shed on the cross, may wash our souls from original and actual sin, and implant at the same time in our hearts a supernatural love of Him, founded on this faith. Thus we read (Acts x. 30-32) "Cornelius said: Four days ago, unto this hour, I was praying in my house, at the ninth hour, and behold a man stood before me in white apparel, and said: 'Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thy alms are had in remembrance, in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter.' " And Péter coming, instructed Cornelius in the Christian faith, and baptized him.

But do our good works afterward, when we are united with Christ, help in any way, or join in with His in satisfying for our sin? Now we get at the real point.

I would ask you to turn to St. Paul's epistle to the Colossians. In the first chapter (v. 24), you will find, in your own version, the Apostle saying of himself: "I, Paul, . . . who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church."

Now, was not this great presumption for St. Paul to undertake to fill up what was behind (or wanting, as the more natural translation is) of the afflictions or sufferings of Christ? I do not see how any Bible Christian can think so. But does not it imply that Christ's redemption was in some way inadequate? No, not at all, according to our doctrine on the subject.

And why not? Because we hold that it is Christ's merits and sufferings only which can give any certain value to the works of St. Paul or of any one else. It is Christ's Death and Passion which runs through everything; He redeems us from our sins, He pays the penalty of them; but He also sets the seal of His Passion and Death on our little efforts, made in union with Him, by His grace, and by souls which believe in Him and accept His salvation. And why not in the way of satisfying for sin, as well as in that of obtaining an increased heavenly reward?

You will say because Christ's redemption or satisfaction was in itself so full and complete

that nothing more remains to be done in that way. But if so, what is this that St. Paul speaks of that is "behind" or wanting in it?

It is just this. Christ's salvation is free, yes; to obtain that, we have only to accept it, accompanying, of course, our acceptance with true repentance, and love for Him who has given it. But salvation is not all. If it were, we should, when our sins are forgiven, be free from even the natural consequences which they have entailed. But it is evident that we are not. The mental and bodily weakness, disease, or suffering which comes from sin still remains, as we know for a fact, unless it is removed by some special miracle. We are often also amenable to the law of man for it; and this law of man is sanctioned by the law of God. All that is absolutely promised us by salvation is that if we persevere in the love of God, we shall ultimately see Him and be with Him in heaven for ever. But it does not follow that we may not still have to suffer for our sins on the way. That is clear from all human experience.

Now, what we Catholics hold is simply this: that as a man may by natural means, by subjecting himself, for instance, to a painful bodily discipline or treatment, remove or avoid the natural consequences which his sins have naturally caused, so he may by supernatural means, that is, by the merits of Christ still lying in store

for him, avoid a remaining temporal penalty in the supernatural order which is still due even after eternal salvation has been given him. This salvation, due to Christ's merits, has been given him with but little trouble on his part; it has been brought, as it were, to his door. The remainder is also waiting for him, but he has to take some trouble to get it; to travel a little distance, as we may say; to use some exertion. He has to fill up, not what is absolutely wanting in Christ's sufferings, but what is wanting *to him*; what he has not yet laid hold of; and this he has to do with some effort and some pain.

Now, this doctrine of a remaining temporal penalty for sin is in complete accordance with the idea of forgiveness; it does not contradict it in any way. A father forgives his son a fault, but still he requires him to make some amends for the fault; it is better, even for the son's own sake, that he should do so.

And it is also in accordance with what the Bible tells us about God's own dealings. We read in the Old Testament of King David (II. Samuel xii. 13): "Nathan said to David: The Lord also hath taken away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Nevertheless because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing the child that is born to thee shall surely die."

Again we read in the same book (chapter

xxiv.) that David offended God by pride in numbering the people. He acknowledged and bewailed his fault, but was punished for it, by a plague cutting off seventy thousand of those he had numbered. Afterward he was told to build an altar to the Lord; and he did so, and offered on it holocausts and peace-offerings; and (v. 25) "The plague was stayed from Israel." Here we have not only the temporal punishment appointed by God for sin, but also the removal of it by the substitution in its place of prayers and good works.

It is plain, then, is it not, that David by his holocausts and offerings, satisfied for his sin as far as this temporal penalty was concerned? but surely he had no advantage that we also have not. He was forgiven his sin, and the temporal penalty was remitted, just in the same way as it is with us now; both remissions were in view not merely of David's acts, but of Christ's merits. The case then with David was just the same as it is with us now. There is no difference between his time and ours, except that the real expiation had not then been made; but there was only one real expiation for sin, then as now; and now, as well as then, our own acts, poor and miserable as they are, can be, and are, sanctified by this one great Sacrifice which, in the fulness of time, God Himself offered for us.

This, then, is what Catholics mean by satisfaction. And notice, it must be made, it can only be made, by a soul which has been forgiven, and which now loves God; notice also that it has no efficacy whatever except so far as it rests on the sacrifice of Christ.

Now, almost all Christians who have attained adult years, even if thoroughly repentant for sin, and in the love of God, probably owe a considerable temporal penalty for their past sins. They will have to suffer something for them before they can see God's Face in heaven. Something they could do to avert this—they could substitute something for it, just as David did; but do they? Not very much, as a rule, beyond bearing with patience the sufferings of this life which God may send them. These sufferings, and their patience, no doubt count for a good deal; but it would appear that those who have sinned a good deal do not have more suffering, probably less on the whole than those who have led good and holy lives. So it would seem that satisfaction in their case is mostly postponed till after death.

So purgatory is not only a state, as explained in the beginning, of punishment for venial sin, that is, for those lesser sins which do not make us lose the love of God; but also it is in purgatory that the temporal penalty due to mortal or grievous sin, even when it is repented of, is

paid, unless satisfaction has been made for it in this life.

And we believe that most Christians who die in the love of God go to purgatory for a time, for few repent or expiate their venial sins or their mortal ones as they should, in this life; but we do not believe that any one, however firmly he may hold the Catholic faith, goes to purgatory if he dies unrepentant of mortal sin. No, such an one is lost for ever; there is no purgatory for him.

But of course we do not know, individually, who goes there and who does not. Those who seem the holiest and fit for heaven at once, may still in the sight of God need further purifying and further satisfaction; and those who seem to die unrepentant may really turn to God at the last. So we *presume* all Catholics who die to be in purgatory; though it may often seem more probable for a particular soul that it is in heaven or in hell.

Now, is there anything that we believe can be done for them, if they are in purgatory? Certainly, if we admit that there is a purgatory, there seems to be no reason why we may not pray for the souls there in general, or for any particular soul which may be there; for we may always pray for anything which may be pleasing to God, and we know that the deliverance of a soul from purgatory is pleasing to God, for

it is a thing which He certainly intends to accomplish. And charity also must induce us to pray, especially for those souls most near and dear to us.

Furthermore, St. Paul tells us (Col. v. 24, as quoted) that he fills up "what is behind of the sufferings of Christ . . . for His body's sake, which is the Church." St. Paul, then, suffered for the Church; for his brethren in Christ, as well as on account of any sins of his own. We hold then, in accordance with his teaching, that we may also do something in this way; offering up our own sufferings, either unavoidable or voluntary, for our suffering brethren.

Also David offered, as we have seen, sacrifices for his sins to satisfy for their temporal punishment; and his sacrifices were accepted. Now, if David's sacrifices, which were but the shadow or presage of the true sacrifice of Christ, were accepted, have we not something more acceptable now; namely, the offering of that one true Sacrifice, in the form of bread and wine, under which the true Lamb of God once slain is truly present, though concealed? Even if one does not grant what we believe about the Mass, certainly it is not inferior to David's holocausts. Why then, following David and St. Paul, should we not offer Mass for the souls of the dead?

This, then, is what priests do ; but they do not extort money from the faithful for this purpose. If any one wishes a Mass for their deceased friends, it is no more than right that they should contribute according to their means to the priest's support ; for, as a priest simply, he has no other means of support. The usual offering in this country is one dollar ; certainly a priest cannot become very wealthy on that, as he can say Mass but once a day. But priests are very careful not to force people to pay money, or to insist on it except where it is due for expenses which have to be incurred for the people's sake, such as those for churches or schools. Priests are not millionaires ; they simply cannot provide these things, where the Church is not supported by the state, unless the people pay for them.

Now, I think we have pretty well gone over this doctrine of purgatory, and of the Catholic practice with regard to it. But you may probably ask what evidence we have that there is any purgatory ; why do we make it a part of our faith ?

To this I would answer that we make it a matter of faith because, if it is clear with regard to any doctrine that it always has been believed in the Church, it is with regard to this. Faith expresses itself in practice ; and we find the practice of praying for the dead reaching

not only into the early ages of Christianity, but even into those of the Old Testament. As a matter of history, at least, this is made clear from the second book of the Machabees, in which we read of Judas Machabeus that, "making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead;) and because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."

I say as a matter of history, at least; for though Protestants do not regard the books of the Machabees as inspired, they cannot deny that these books were read reverently by the Jews, and no protest made against this doctrine by those who believed in the resurrection. It may be added that the Jews at the present day pray for the dead, as their fathers did before them.

And we do not find that any protest was made against prayers for the dead till the peculiar Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone was introduced at the time of the Reformation. This doctrine, of course, shuts

out the idea of such prayers, for it requires no real purity of soul as a condition for entrance into heaven; it only requires that its uncleanness should be covered by the mantle of Christ's righteousness accepted by faith; and hence, of course, according to it, there is no difference in fitness for heaven between the soul of the most perfect follower of Christ and that of a life-long sinner, if only both have accepted Him as their Saviour.

But we have quite an explicit teaching or explanation of the doctrine of purgatory in the writings of St. Paul in the New Testament. It is very hard to conceive any other meaning for the passage. It is found in the first epistle of the Apostle to the Corinthians, iii. 11-15; and is as follows: "For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is CHRIST JESUS. Now, if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

This passage seems to plainly teach that the

works of Christians differ in their acceptableness with God ; that their good works, done to please God, shall not be touched by this fire, but their works which are more or less spoiled by sin must be purified if not altogether consumed by it, the soul of the sinner nevertheless being saved. What is this fire which burns some works of Christians, but not others, the soul still being saved, if not that of purgatory?

But do not for a moment imagine that the Church teaches, or that any Catholic imagines, that unrepented mortal sin can be burnt out in this way. By no means ; as has been said, there is no salvation for any one dying with such sin on his head.

As to the suffering in purgatory, the Church has never defined precisely what it is ; and it is probable that in this life we cannot fully understand it. The soul in purgatory is separated from the body by death, and not yet reunited with it by the resurrection, so that bodily pains, as we understand them, seem impossible. Nevertheless, all suffering really is in the soul ; and it is possible that the disembodied soul may suffer pains similar to that which in this life come to it through the body. But the principal suffering would seem to be that which comes from the temporary separation of the soul from God, whom it desires and longs to be united with most ardently.

Instinctively, I think, almost every one recognizes or wishes to recognize the truth of the Catholic faith in this respect. Of course when one dear to us dies in the faith of Christ after a saintly, or even an ordinarily good life, there is not much difficulty in representing them to ourselves as being now in heaven ; but when the life of such an one has been quite worldly and imperfect, we all feel that he is hardly fit for heaven, and yet we cannot bring ourselves really to believe that his portion is with the lost. We feel that God will yet be merciful to him, and admit him to the heaven for which he has hoped, and to which, though weakly and imperfectly, and with many falls by the way, he has endeavored to direct his steps. And we want, if we love such an one, to do something to help him, and to hasten the hour of his arrival at that eternal home. And even though we may have been taught that prayers for the dead are useless, they will rise unbidden to our lips. It is human nature's tribute to the Catholic teaching, which is also that of the Greek Church. and of all the churches of the East as well ; and is not only consoling to our feelings and hopes, but also in accordance with reason and common sense.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD ; EVERLAST- ING LIFE.

I HAVE said that purgatory, as understood and believed by Catholics, is a temporary state ; with regard to its duration in any particular case, of course we can know nothing, unless by some special revelation. However, it is evident that it cannot extend after what is commonly known as the day of judgment.

With regard to this day of judgment it is a matter of faith that there will be such a day, in which all mankind will be judged together, and the place or state of every human being definitely assigned for all eternity. No doctrine is more plainly taught in Holy Scripture than this.

We have in the book of Daniel (xii. 2) the following words : " And many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake : some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always."

From this, as it stands in English, we should plainly gather that only some of the dead were to arise to judgment ; and it is a good instance of the impossibility of arriving at certain con-

clusions of faith by simply taking the translated Bible as we have it in our vernacular, and the futility of attempting to do so. Taking this as we should naturally understand it, it is in contradiction to the words of our Lord himself (John v. 28-29): "Wonder not at this, for the hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life ; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." For you notice that Daniel says, "many of those," whereas Christ says "all."

It is plain that unless Daniel is to contradict our Lord Himself, we must understand by the words "many" in his text, that the number will be great ; and we must look at the idiom of the language in which his words were originally written. Hence the need of some interpreters of the Bible must, it seems to me, be quite clear, unless every Christian is expected to be a learned man and a profound student.

We also find in St. Matthew's gospel (xxv. 31-46) a very explicit and full description of the day of judgment, given by Christ Himself: "And when the Son of Man shall come in His Majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His Majesty ; and all nations shall be gathered together before

Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats" (verses 31, 32).

St. Peter is very full also in his description of the day of judgment ; telling us distinctly that the world shall at that time be destroyed by fire. He says (I. Pet. iii. 10): "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up."

Science, I need hardly say, cannot contradict this prophecy ; for no one who believes in God can deny His power to dispose of what He has made, by special exertions of His power ; but it may be added that such a destruction of the earth may easily come from causes now in operation. To produce such an effect, a collision of some large external body with the earth or the sun, or even a serious derangement of the orbit of the earth by the influence of such a body, would be amply sufficient.

The doctrine of the general judgment is taught clearly in other parts of Scripture, but it is hardly necessary to dwell longer on the matter. It is generally accepted by Christians who believe in revelation, and is embodied in what is called the Apostles' Creed, which Christians generally recite. "From thence" (that is, from

heaven) " he shall come to judge the living and the dead," are the words of this creed.

We are told, as has been seen, that at the general judgment our bodies shall rise from the graves in which they have been laid. But how about those which have not been buried ; those which have been cremated, torn and devoured by wild beasts or cannibals ?

To this it may be answered that it is not necessary that all the particles actually composing a human body at the time of death should be reassembled in the body which shall rise at the last day. This would require a special and miraculous Divine interposition in some cases, as in that of a cannibal dying shortly after he had thoroughly assimilated some portions of another human body with his own ; to avoid the difficulty, it would be necessary that his life should be specially preserved against the attacks of his enemies until these portions had departed from his body, or that they should be prevented from assimilation, or removed in some miraculous way.

Also in the case of a good and holy person dying, as may well be the case, with a body wasted or corrupted by some loathsome and disfiguring disease ; it surely would not be that spoiled body with which that person would rise, and could hardly be a new one made from the identical particles of which that was composed.

And indeed the Church teaches that the glorified bodies of the saints shall not have disfiguring and inglorious marks like these, and that limbs or members which they have lost shall be restored in heaven; for our Lord can hardly have meant in saying, as we find His words recorded in Mark ix. 42, that we should actually enter "into life, maimed," or (v. 44), "lame, into life everlasting," but rather that we should lose our hands and feet in this life rather than forfeit the life to come; for perfect happiness would be inconsistent with these blemishes and inconveniences. Compare also Matt. v. 29, 30, where the same lesson is taught in different words. These defects must then be made up from material not belonging to the body at the time of death; and there seems to be no reason at all why this material should at any time of life have belonged to that body, and been separated from it in the constant changes which our bodies undergo in this life.

The fact is that a precise restoration of all the particles belonging to a body is not necessary to constitute identity. When the change goes on gradually we call a body the same though all its particles may be replaced in course of time by others, as in the case of our bodies during life. And a considerable change may even be suddenly made without affecting identity. No one would dream that our bodies lost identity

by having a tooth pulled, or a new piece of skin grafted on in place of what had been destroyed.

We must conclude, then, simply that at the resurrection the body will be what we should call the same as that which we have now, but not that every individual particle or chemical atom of the elements of which it is composed, no more and no less, shall be used in its reconstruction.

From what has been said and the texts which have been quoted, it is plain that there will be two distinct classes of those who rise at the last day. Some rise, as Daniel tells us, to life everlasting, the others to reproach ; or as our Lord tells us more distinctly, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life ; they that have done evil, to that of judgment ; that is, for the former sin and death are blotted out and destroyed for ever ; whereas in the latter sin remains, to be judged according to its deserts, the merits of the death of Christ not having been applied to atone for it.

It is not, however, that Christ did not shed His blood for all ; the Church teaches that He did. But some have refused to avail themselves of His sacrifice, by not repenting and turning from sin, and believing and trusting in their Saviour, so far as He has been made known to them.

It is impossible for us to decide what on the

whole will be the resurrection or future state of those who have had no opportunity of knowing anything about Christ and the redemption which He has offered. But we do know that salvation was possible before this redemption was actually accomplished, or the way of it distinctly made known; and it seems certainly impossible that the state of a man could be changed by the actual accomplishment of the great sacrifice of the Cross, if the conditions under which he was living were such that he could not possibly hear of it, or that in fact he had not the slightest information with regard to it. Therefore it seems certain that by means of the death of Christ all men in all ages have had, and that all now living have, the means of salvation, if they make the best use of the light and the grace from God which is given to them. And indeed St. Thomas Aquinas, than whom there is no higher human authority in the Church, tells us that God would send an angel specially to instruct one who could not obtain what instruction was necessary in any other way.

So we need not inquire further into this matter; it is our duty to bring the light of the gospel to those who do not have it, to instruct them in the Christian faith, and persuade them to embrace it; especially as without the strength which it gives it is extremely hard even to keep

the law which is manifest to all, as St. Paul says (Rom. i. 19-20). But we should not pass absolute judgment on any one, and especially not on those to whom the gospel has not been preached. St. Paul says (I. Cor. v. 12, 13): "What have I to do to judge them that are without? . . . For them that are without, God will judge."

Those, then, who by faith of some kind, and by a life corresponding to it, have pleased God, shall be saved. But let it not be imagined that a man can, therefore, simply rest content with the knowledge that he has, or that with which others are seemingly satisfied. It is the duty of every one to know God's will and God's truth according to the means offered to him; not to rest till he has attained what knowledge is attainable by him on this, the most important of all matters. And having attained it, he must regulate his life according to it; not transgressing the known law, or impugning the known truth; or if he have done so, repenting with his whole heart. One mortal sin, one grievous departure from what conscience dictates, takes away the life of the soul in God, and brings upon it eternal condemnation. And carelessness or indifference as to what God wills us to believe or to do has manifestly the same effect.

Let it not, then, be imagined that we can

adopt the shallow and deceitful maxim, that it makes no difference what a man believes, as long as his life is right. For how can a man's life be right if he sins against God by disbelief in what He teaches or reveals, or indifference as to whether He does actually teach or reveal a particular truth, whether that truth concern faith or morals? This maxim simply takes for granted that every one naturally and without effort knows everything about his duty; that every one, no matter what his education or surroundings, knows what it has puzzled the greatest human intellects, unassisted by revelation, to discover.

But to resume our proper subject. Those who are saved or lost are, according to the faith of the Church, saved or lost both body and soul at the general resurrection. To the former are given bodies not only perfect and incorruptible, but also endowed with other properties not naturally belonging to material substances; the faculty of passing over great distances with ease and quickness, and of passing unobstructed through material obstacles; as was the case with the risen body of Christ, which, as we read (John xx. 19), presented itself to his disciples though the doors were shut. Also the bodies of the saved shall be insensible to pain, and of course not liable to disease or weariness; and shall be perpetually

young and strong, and receive nothing but comfort and enjoyment from any circumstances in which they may be placed.

As to those of the lost, the direct opposite is held. The results and consequences of sin remain in them ; they are incorruptible and indestructible, but otherwise they have no supernatural qualities. They are sensible to pain, and undoubtedly suffer it ; just what this pain is, has never been precisely defined ; the common opinion has always been that it was to a great extent actual fire, as our Lord Himself uses this word in describing it.

Now another question remains to be considered. What is the state of the souls of the lost, from the time of death, and of that of the saved from the time of their deliverance from purgatory—if that purification has been necessary for them—to the time of the resurrection?

The teaching of the Church on this point is that heaven begins for the saved, and hell for the lost, before the resurrection ; though in a limited and incomplete sense ; and yet in the most important respect, for the principal happiness of heaven is in the union of the soul with God, and in its enjoyment of Him by what is called the beatific vision, whereas the principal misery of hell is in the eternal separation of the soul from God, which is then most keenly felt, the vanity and insufficiency of the false

pleasures sought during life being then plainly seen. And as it is, after all, in the soul that all real pain or happiness is felt, there is no reason why there should not be in heaven before the resurrection something equivalent to bodily enjoyment, or in hell, as in purgatory, to bodily pain.

The soul, then, is believed to pass to what is called the particular judgment (that is, the judgment for each one in particular), immediately after death ; and its eternal state is then determined, according as it has left this world in union with, or separation from God. Most of those on whom a favorable sentence is pronounced, we have reason to believe, remain a while in purgatory before they are fit to enter on the joys of heaven ; and they themselves, recognizing their unfitness, would desire nothing else. The rest go immediately to their permanent state, only to be changed at the last day by the resurrection and resumption of the body, which shares in the punishment of sin, as it has shared in the sin itself.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PRIMACY OF THE ROMAN PONTIFF.

THE next article of the profession of faith which we are discussing concerns "the primacy, not only of honor, but also of jurisdiction, of the Roman Pontiff." It is hardly necessary to say that by the Roman Pontiff is meant the Pope. That we regard him as the successor of St. Peter, and St. Peter as the Prince or head of the apostles, has already been stated. By his being the Vicar of Jesus Christ we mean that he is the representative of Christ as the head of the Church, and under Christ, its visible head and ruler.

Now, what is meant by the primacy, not only of *honor*, but also of *jurisdiction*, of the Pope?

Primacy means the first or most distinguished place. By a primacy of honor would be meant the being entitled above others to certain outward signs of respect, the having what is called the precedence over others in public assemblies, processions, and the like. Thus in England, for example, the Prince of Wales has a primacy of honor, next after the Queen; after her, the greatest outward respect would be shown to him. But he has, as long as he remains merely

Prince of Wales, no jurisdiction whatever in the kingdom. He does not sit in Parliament and has no voice in the making of the laws and his approval of them is not required.

By jurisdiction is meant just this, the power of making laws, or in some way governing others legally. So in this respect, you see, a member of the House of Commons in England has jurisdiction, which the Prince of Wales has not. The primacy of jurisdiction would belong to him who had the greatest power of law-making or of government.

When we say, then, that in the Catholic Church the Pope has not only the primacy of honor, but also of jurisdiction, we mean that not only is the Pope entitled to the greatest outward marks of respect, that to him, for example, would belong by right the first place of honor in all assemblies or councils of bishops and prelates, but also that he has a higher governing power in the Church than any of them.

In fact the Catholic doctrine is that the Pope has supreme jurisdiction in the Church; that there is no jurisdiction or government in it which is not liable to control by him. He has the power of making laws for the whole Church, or of repealing laws which have been made; being however, of course, limited in this, like other legislators, by the condition that his laws must be useful, just, and reasonable,

and not in conflict with the divine law. In case of doubt on any of those points, however, the presumption, as with other legislators, is in his favor.

Bishops have, however, a similar law-making power in their own dioceses, and their laws do not require the Pope's approval that they may go into effect; but the Pope has the right and the power to modify or change the laws of bishops, and to oversee and control their action as he may deem expedient. As a rule, however, he does not exercise this power or interfere with their legislation.

It would be beyond the scope of a work like the present one to bring up the proofs that the Pope is really entitled to this supreme jurisdiction. Whole books have been written on the subject, and can be consulted by any one so inclined. The principal texts of Holy Scripture on which this doctrine is based have been given in the chapter on the infallibility of the Pope; I would merely remark here that there seems to be no reason why our Lord, after twice saying, "feed my lambs," should say the third time, "feed my sheep," unless the word "sheep" meant something different from the word "lambs." The sheep are understood by Catholics to be the prelates of the Church, the lambs the laity.

But the principal argument in its favor is to

be derived from the actual history of the Church, and from the impossibility of such an enormous usurpation of power as this would be without the force of arms to carry it out.

The supreme power of the Pope is also in accordance with the requirements of common sense. For the Church, to maintain its position in the world, and to discharge effectively the office committed to it by Christ, must necessarily have some general government; and that government cannot well be by means of a congress or parliament, on account of the difficulty of calling such a body together in an institution which is world-wide; the monarchical form seems then necessary for it; and the dangers of the extraordinary powers residing in its head are well compensated, to say nothing of the special divine supervision by Christ the invisible head of the Church, by the weakness of its visible head the Pope, as far as the arms of this world are concerned.

But now an important point must be considered; and it is this. The sphere of the Papal government is spiritual, not temporal. The Pope, *as such*, has no right to command in matters which simply concern the temporal well-being of men in general, or even of Catholics in particular; in other words, he has no power to make laws on those subjects with which the State is legitimately concerned. On the con-

trary, his whole influence, and that of the Church in general, is rightfully used, and as a matter of fact has always been used, to inculcate obedience to existing governments, even though their strict right to govern might be questioned. It has always maintained the doctrine taught by St. Paul (Rom. xiii. 1-2): "Let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation."

It is perfectly clear to any one who will read history that disobedience to the laws of the State has been always regarded by the Church as sinful, as long as the State keeps within its legitimate province. But if the State arrogates to itself powers which belong to the direct government of God over the individual soul, or to the province of the Church itself as the guide of its members in spiritual affairs, such an usurpation the Church cannot sanction. The State cannot lawfully command us to blaspheme the name of God, or to commit adultery; neither can it command us to deny the Christian faith, as the emperors of heathen Rome and other persecutors have endeavored to do. Nor can the State make laws directing the consciences of Catholics in the matter of a divine

institution like marriage, which has a spiritual as well as a temporal aspect, except so far as the merely temporal part, such as the inheritance of property, is concerned.

This was the basis, for example, of the resistance of Catholics to the attempts of the English sovereigns, specially of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and James I., to enforce the oath of allegiance to the sovereign as head of the Church as well as of the State. This Catholics knew to be an intrusion, an usurpation of power; and they suffered heavy penalties, and often a most horrible form of death, rather than submit to it. I shall have more to say of this matter of persecution later on. For the present it may merely be remarked that what may be called persecution on the part of the State, of openly expressed opinions and of practices which are contrary to its well-being in the temporal order, are obviously sometimes necessary, as in the cases of anarchists and polygamists; though the victims may complain that their consciences are trampled on, and if they really believe that their consciences speak to them in the name of God, may be properly called martyrs to what appears to them to be the truth.

The relations of the Pope and of the Catholic Church to the State, or in other words, to the political government of the country, are a matter most important to understand, and one which

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has always occupied a foremost place in the minds of Englishmen and Americans. It is not too much to say that the real reason of the success of the Reformation in England was not so much any attachment to its doctrines on the part of Englishmen, as a fear and jealousy of Papal interference in the government of the country. * And it is the same here. We hear continually that the Catholics care more for the Pope than for America, that the priests manage and control their vote in the interests of the Church, and other stuff of this kind, which would be simply amusing to us from the absurdity of many forms in which the idea is expressed, did we not know that, strange and ludicrous as it seems to us, it is considered quite a serious matter by our fellow-countrymen. If they only knew a little, or would make themselves a little acquainted with the way things really work, they would see that priests do not and cannot direct the Catholic people politically, except where some moral question is involved in which the voice of the Catholic Church may be quite clear, as, for example, the matter of temperance, or of the laws of marriage; and they would notice if they would follow the priest in his daily life in his house and in the church, that politics played much less of a part in it than in that of the Protestant minister, especially in these latter days; that

he does not preach about politics, talk about it on the streets or in the homes of his people, or bring it up in the confessional. To do so would simply weaken his influence on the people for good, and they would in fact be scandalized at a priest's devoting much time even to talking about it, and still more if he should be a political worker. Of course there are such cases, and the Catholic people do not admire them.

And if Protestants would inquire a little, they would also find that priests who do take interest in politics are on both sides, both Democrat and Republican; that they sometimes get into quite animated discussion among themselves about political matters; and that the same is the case with the Catholic people. The priests may have political opinions, of course, like any other American citizens, but they cannot force them on the people for the very simple reason that they disagree with each other, and cannot speak in the name of the Church about these matters because the Church does not tell them what to say.

But in connection with this general subject there is one special point deserving of a more extended discussion; one which has excited a good deal of interest, and never more than at present, in the minds of Americans; and that is the position the Catholic Church takes with

regard to education, which seems to many Protestants unpatriotic (if they do not call it by some worse name) and full of danger for the future of the country. As this matter comes right in our line at present, I will devote a chapter to it, though it has no very direct relation to the substance of the profession of faith which we are occupied in considering.

CHAPTER XIV.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION.

AS we enter on this subject, I shall first endeavor to dislodge from your minds a strange idea which seems to have settled quite firmly in those of many American Protestants; that is, that the main point Catholics are anxious about in educational matters is the driving of the Bible out of the schools. Our Protestant friends start with the assumption that we detest the Bible, and do not want our people to read it or even hear of it. They believe that Martin Luther dragged it from the obscurity to which it had been consigned for centuries, and that one of the principal efforts of the Church has been ever since then to get it back, at least as far as Catholics are concerned, into that obscurity.

In fact, the effort of the Church has always been the other way; that is, to induce her children to read the Bible. It was, of course rather difficult to do much at this before the invention of printing; Bibles, though commoner than other books, were rare enough, necessarily. But when printing was invented Bibles were immediately printed, and Catholics were encouraged to read them. It is strange how hard it is to get solid, hard, historical facts into the heads of those whose previous ideas do not fit in with them, and how the most absurd legends are accepted in their place. As to the facts, I quote from Dr. Maitland's *Dark Ages* the following, which may be more convincing, as the author was a distinguished Protestant clergyman, librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He says: "To say nothing of parts of the Bible, or of books whose place is uncertain, we know of at least twenty different editions of the whole Latin Bible printed in Germany only before Luther was born." Again, Seckendorf, the biographer and admirer of Luther, confesses in his *Commentaries on Lutheranism* that three distinct editions of the Bible translated into German were published at Wittenberg in 1470, 1483, and 1490. Now Luther was born in 1483. In all, about seventy editions of the Bible, translated into the

vernacular tongues of Europe, were published before Luther had got out one copy of his German Bible.

The Bible that Luther found, and which it is supposed was such a great discovery, was a Latin one; it will be seen from what has just been said what nonsense it is to suppose that he found it by a rare chance, and rescued it from obscurity. And yet he had the audacity to say, in his *Table Talk*, that he was twenty years old before he saw the Scriptures. This, no doubt, may impose and has imposed on many; but to those in possession of the facts it must be evident either that he was singularly ignorant or indifferent in his early life about the Holy Scriptures, or that when he made the above statement he was simply telling a lie.

I said above that the desire and effort of the Church is, and always has been, that Catholics should read the Bible. But she desires that they should read it reverently, not twisting it to support their own fancies, but understanding its more difficult passages as they have been understood by learned and enlightened Christian commentators. Catholics, however, have never been so anxious to read it as the Church has been that they should do so; and indeed the reason is not far to seek. For they know that no passage of the Bible is contrary to their faith, or can teach them anything

absolutely new or startling in the matter of religion, when it is rightly understood; so it becomes to them a book of what we call spiritual reading, very excellent no doubt, but in most of its parts differing principally from other spiritual books (of which we have, by the way, probably a hundred to every one possessed by Protestants) in its being absolutely authoritative and inspired, whereas the others are only practically sure to be free from error. In other spiritual books the truths of the Bible are presented more fully and in a more modern and familiar style, so that we can hardly wonder that they are, as a rule, preferred; and that though good Catholic families generally have a Bible, it is more venerated than read. But none have any principle against reading the Bible; and all know that their pastors would like them to read it.

But why then, you will ask, did they, and the priests too, object to reading the Bible in the schools? This is not a difficult question to answer. One reason was that the Bible used was the Protestant Bible, to which we have objections on account of its not being an authorized, or in all respects a correct translation, and also on account of its leaving out a number of books which we consider as the word of God. Also we object to the Bible, a book confessedly hard in many places to understand, being read

out to children and young people by persons often having no real acquaintance with or reverence for its sacred text ; and experience shows that the reading of the Bible in this way tends to destroy respect for it, and often leads even to jokes being made upon its words. Lastly, we should always object to having Catholic children forced to obtain instruction from Protestant sources, and to join in prayer under Protestant guidance. We do not force our religion on others, we do not want others to force theirs on us. It strikes us that this is nothing but the liberty to which Americans are entitled.

Another objection that Catholics have to the reading of the Bible in the schools is that it is liable to be accompanied by the recitation of the Protestant form of the Lord's prayer, in which the words "for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever," which we do not recognize as belonging to the sacred text, and which are generally considered by critics to be an addition made by copyists, are found. The omission of the "Hail Mary," a prayer, as has been seen, dating from very early times, is also liable to give scandal to our children. The long and short of it is that we prefer to say our own prayers, and to say them in our own way.

But this whole matter of prayers or Bible-reading is in fact, as has been already stated,

a comparatively unimportant issue. The real point is that we do not consider the religious instruction given in this way as at all adequate though it is, of course, better than nothing, except for the inconveniences already mentioned.

We regard religion as the most important part of a child's education.

We are very far from despising the ordinary branches of knowledge taught in the public schools; though, in common with many others, we consider a great deal of the instruction there imparted to be quite useless, simply a stuffing of the heads and straining of the memory of the young with matters of no use except for those who are to pursue some special line of intellectual work in later life. But we consider instruction in the principal points of faith as more necessary than even the most elementary teaching of arithmetic; since it is much more of an advantage to know the way of salvation than to be able to add up a column of figures. We do not wonder that our Protestant or infidel fellow-citizens do not look at the matter just as we do; for as they look round on the world in general, it necessarily seems to them that creeds are simply opinions held on a subject on which certainty is quite unattainable, and that every one will have to form his own opinion after his school-days are over. But it is different with us. The truths of faith are with

us a matter of certain knowledge, not of opinion; they are verities revealed distinctly by Almighty God, and coming down to us, by the wonderful means which He has instituted, unchanged and immovable through these eighteen centuries. They are more certain as well as more important than anything else we can know, for it is God Himself who tells them to us.

We insist, then, that they be not sacrificed to matters of far less value. We do not want to have our children, tired out with mental application during the week, restricted to an hour at most on Sunday for learning these supremely important branches of knowledge. And we desire this not only as Christians, but as patriots; for we know that the teachings of the Catholic religion are the best that can possibly be given to make good citizens. A Catholic who believes what his religion teaches cannot be a socialist, an anarchist, or a free-lover. Indeed, all the real dangers now threatening the social fabric come, as we know very clearly, and as others would also know if they would only try to find out what we really do teach, from the neglect of Catholic doctrine.

It is, then, no more than reasonable, since we cannot expect that these truths, salutary as they are, should be taught in the public schools, that we should use all lawful means

to secure them at least for our own people. We do not want to force them on any one else, but we do not want to lose what we have, and what our children ought to have after us. And also it is reasonable that we should protest earnestly against all compulsory schemes of education which would prevent us from teaching adequately these most important matters to those who, by the faith they have, will firmly believe and act upon them. And it is also perfectly reasonable that we should endeavor to have the public school system so arranged that parents, whether Catholic or not, may, where it is practicable, provide for the religious instruction of their children in the same schools in which their secular training is given. In other countries of mixed religions this is done without detriment to good schooling and without making the State responsible for anything more than the secular studies.

Now, I say that we are willing that the State should teach the children the common branches of knowledge which all should have, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, and the more elementary portions of mathematics and of physical science. But there is, no doubt, a difficulty here.

It is with regard to history especially. We are not willing that distinctively Protestant education on this matter should be given to our children. We are not willing, for instance,

that they should be taught that Luther began his Reformation because the Church was selling people permission to commit sin. We do not blame you for teaching that to your children, if you really believe it; but we know that it is false. We know that an indulgence is not a permission to commit sin; that every Catholic would be horrified at the idea of a permission to commit sin being given under any circumstances, and much more that it should be sold. We cannot tolerate instruction being given to our children which falsely represents the Church as a monster of iniquity. And so with regard to other matters which Protestants hardly notice, and which, perhaps, slip in here and there in connection with almost any subject, so much have they been accustomed to take false statements against the Church for granted, and even to consider them as self-evident truths. As, for example, the common representation in geographies of countries as being "enlightened" simply because they are Protestant, while Catholic ones are barely recognized as "civilized," if even that courtesy is allowed them. We want our children to learn facts, not opinions. We do not want to fling mud at Protestants, or represent them as holding doctrines which they themselves disclaim; and if any such statements can be found in our books, we are ready to expunge them in-

stantly. But if they will not do the same for us, we must have our own books; that is all there is about it. And we have no desire to represent Protestants or infidels as grovelling in ignorance or laziness; we give them full credit for what they have done and are doing in the natural order, and simply insist that they shall give us credit for what we have also done; if they will not do us justice, we must do it ourselves.

We are ready to do everything that we can, without sacrificing our most vital interests, for the convenience of all; we do not want separate schools for our children if we can in any other way, without unjust burden on ourselves, get the religious instruction for them which they need. We do not want to build up any walls between our children and others unnecessarily; we want them to be true patriotic Americans, heart and soul devoted to the interests of the glorious nation to which they belong. But we cannot sacrifice the spiritual for the temporal, the interests of eternity for those of this world.

Try, then, to get rid of these bugbears which have been haunting the English mind for centuries about our wanting to subject this country to the Pope; these visions of armies of Jesuits, in or out of disguise, who want to control the politics of the nation for the temporal aggrandizement of the Church. We would

like to convert you all to the Catholic faith, that is true ; but we want to do so by reason and truth, not by force or trickery. And we desire your conversion for your own sake, not for any advantage it is going to bring to us. The Pope does not want any temporal power or kingdom, except so much as is needed to make him independent of the nations, so that he can freely exercise his spiritual office, without fear of interference or undue influence from any of them. He would not take the Presidency, or even the permanent sovereignty, of this or any other country, except that of which he has been unjustly deprived. He has got quite enough to attend to as it is.

What he wants, and what we all want, is simply to have in fact what all Americans have in theory ; that is, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience, as long as by so doing we do not injure the liberty or the rights of others. That is the whole matter in a nutshell, though your prejudices may make it hard for you to believe it.

CHAPTER XV.

THE VENERATION OF THE SAINTS, AND OF THEIR IMAGES.

THIS is the next article of our profession. And it is a point on which, more than any other, the Protestant mind in general entertains false notions of our creed, and consequently objects most vehemently to it.

It is even said that in order to indulge our idolatrous practices we have gone so far as to suppress the second commandment of the Decalogue, by which the worship of idols is most clearly forbidden.

It is really a wonderful thing that intelligent people should suppose that we wanted to do such a thing as this, or that we could succeed in doing it even if we wanted to. It would be a great deal more reasonable to say that we had a special edition of our own of the Constitution of the United States, which Catholic lawyers and statesmen held to be the correct one. Even if you will believe us to be liars and deceivers, this is too palpable a fraud.

But in fact, if you will take the trouble to look into a Catholic Bible, a book to be found in every Catholic book-store, you will find, in

the same place of course as in your own (Exod. xx. 4), the words: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them."

And you will find the same thing in our catechisms, large and small.

It is, however, true that in some of the smaller ones, intended only for little children, this commandment is omitted. But this is simply because it is long and hard to remember, and because it would be difficult for the very young to understand what it means. Before they get through their Sunday-school they have it all in full; it is not kept back or concealed from any Catholic.

But in fact, even when it is omitted, the omission can hardly do harm. For really the prohibition of the worship of idols which it contains is implicitly contained in the words which go before, and which are always given in all our books, "thou shalt not have strange gods before me," or as it stands in the Protestant version, "thou shalt have no other gods before me." And the real truth of the matter is, that Protestants have made a mistake in making two commandments out of what is really one.

The gist of this one commandment is the worship of the one true God to the exclusion of all others. And when we have the words "thou shalt not have strange gods before me" we have idolatry completely shut out. If we cannot worship any god but the One, it is plain that we cannot take images for gods, and worship them. These words then, out of which Protestants make their second commandment, are really only a principal application of what goes before.

To compensate for the error made in dividing the first commandment into two, Protestants have been obliged to run two into one somewhere else in order to get the number ten, as it should be. They have, therefore, taken the two prohibitions at the end about coveting the neighbor's wife and his goods (which are distinct exactly in the same way as those about adultery and stealing, being the desires corresponding to these acts) and made one out of them. And because we look at the matter in a different and really more reasonable light, they jump at the conclusion that we want to get idolatry in by suppressing the prohibition of it. They take one little catechism, and that is enough to settle the matter. But I hope you see by this time that we have and teach all this about the making of graven images just the same as you do.

But now perhaps you say : “ Even if this is so, it does not help your case, though it does make a point against us. For if the worship of images is condemned in what you admit to be the word of God, you are all the worse in practically sanctioning and allowing it.”

Still, I think any one keeping up the attack on these lines would begin to lose courage a little. For he would see that when you look at the matter closely, it is getting to be a little hard to show that we are sinning against this law of God.

For surely this law cannot mean that we are not to make images of any kind. If so, there has been a fearful disregard of it in almost all Christian countries. If that is the sense of it, the sculptor's business is wrong all the way through, and ought to be most severely prohibited by law. Those statues of great men ought to be removed from our streets and public squares ; you ought to smash the little statuettes you probably have in the house and throw the pieces in the ash-barrel ; you ought not, if you value your soul, to buy a Noah's ark for your children ; for the man who got this up broke this commandment in the most wholesale way.

Oh, no ! you will say, “ we are not so foolish as to think that we may never make images of anything at all. What everybody understands

by this law of God is, that we must not *worship* images. And that is just what you Catholics are doing all the time. Why, you cannot go into a Catholic church but you see some woman, or perhaps even a man, who ought to have more sense, kneeling down before one of these images you have, and praying to it as if it were God. If that is not idolatry, I don't know what is."

No doubt it seems to you now that you have a good certain charge against us. Let us see. After all, one should not judge entirely by appearances. If there is any doubt, every one is entitled to the benefit of it before having to bear the grave charge of idolatry. According to the principles of law, one should be considered innocent until his guilt is proved.

The only real fact the charge is based on is, that the woman is praying, and that while praying she is kneeling before a statue. Now, I suppose that when you pray yourself you are kneeling; that is the posture which is generally considered proper for prayer, though some advanced Christians pray, or at any rate join in the minister's prayers, without leaving their seats, perhaps bending the head a little, or putting their hands or hats before their faces. Still, I hardly think even these would claim that kneeling was an inappropriate position, or showed too much respect.

Well, then, if one is kneeling, he must kneel before something, and probably look at something, unless it is of obligation to put one's head down on a chair or a bed (which, I am sorry to say, even Catholics are too apt to do), or to close one's eyes. The difficulty, you see, about either of these methods is that one is quite apt to go to sleep. So it is better to keep one's eyes open and the head straight up, though this does require some effort.

If, then, one does this, is it best to look at a blank wall, or at some other object? It seems naturally best to look at something which in some way suggests pious thoughts and keeps the mind from wandering. If the mind has no picture presented to it, it will make one of its own, probably. So if we are praying to our Lord Jesus Christ, which the immense majority of Christians, believing in His Divinity, consider it perfectly lawful to do, is there any harm in having a representation of Him before our eyes; a picture of Him such as even Protestants often have, as He appeared at some time during His life here, or as we may imagine Him to appear now in heaven? Will not this help to fix our thoughts on Him? Really, it is not very easy to see why Protestants should not help themselves in this way to pray well and fervently. And even if one is praying, as we generally do, to the Eternal Father Himself,

why not have before our eyes a representation of His well-beloved Son, and especially of His Sacrifice on the Cross, through which our prayers become efficacious with God? Why there should be any objection to praying before a crucifix is really a puzzle; still more is it a puzzle why Christians should object to having a crucifix in their house, when they would willingly have a picture or a statue of George Washington or Abraham Lincoln.

Well, now let us go a step farther. Suppose you had some dear friend whom you confidently believed to be now in heaven; one whose whole life had been to you an example of piety and virtue; one, the very thought of whom would bring you nearer to God and make you feel the value of prayer, and induce you to pray as this one did; would it not help you in your prayer to have the picture of such an one before your eyes?

“Oh, well!” you say, “this is all very fine; but everybody knows that Catholics are not using their pictures and statues, or even their crucifixes, in this way. They are making real idols of them; attaching, that is, a superstitious value to them; believing that these images and pictures have a real power in themselves; in short, making gods of them.”

The true and the short answer to this is, that nobody knows anything of the kind; for no-

body can know something which is entirely false. No Catholic, however ignorant, has any such idea as this, as you would find out if you would ask any one whom you found praying in this way. It might not be safe always to ask such a question, for it would be regarded as an insult, and might naturally provoke a sharp reply, if not something more, unless the person questioned happened to be a saint. The feeling it ought to excite would be pity for the ignorance of the questioner; but people are not always reasonable, and might be apt to look at the matter in a different way.

It is true, however, that the person asked, if patient enough to explain the matter to you, would quite probably give an account of what he or she was doing somewhat different from that which I have thus far given. It might be admitted that the prayers now being made were addressed not immediately to God, but to the saint whose picture or statue was there.

But if so, what then? Suppose that the dear friend of whom I have spoken were to appear visibly before you from heaven, would you simply converse with him on ordinary matters? Would it not occur to you that if he prayed a good deal on earth, there was no reason why this habit of prayer should have been dropped, especially as now he did not need to pray for himself? Would you not then ask that he

would pray for you, that you might also save your soul, as he had done? Do you seriously believe that if your clergyman, your father, or your mother, can pray for you in this world, that they cannot do so if they are admitted to the presence of God in heaven?

“Oh!” you say, “of course I suppose they could, and probably I would ask them to do so. But you see it is not the person in heaven that appears to you, but only a picture or a statue, and that of somebody you never knew in this world, and who probably does not know or care any more about you than the picture or statue itself does.”

Here I acknowledge that you have at last made a reasonable point. And I do not undertake to prove to you that when we pray before a picture or a statue of a saint, that that saint *infallibly* hears or knows what we are saying, or even what we are doing. But I do say that it is not impossible or absurd that they may. Let us listen to some words of our Lord that have some bearing on this point. He says (Matt. xxv. 20): “And he that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying: Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents, behold I have gained other five over and above. His lord said to him: Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place

thee over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord." And in St. Luke xix. 17 we find a similar passage : " Well done, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities."

These passages show clearly what indeed we should naturally expect ; namely, that the servants of God who have pleased Him in this world shall in the next have their opportunities and consequently their powers for good, very much extended ; that they shall be able without effort to attend to much more than they could possibly have attended to here. And it is not for us to place the limit to this extension of their powers, as long as it remains finite ; while it is that, it is infinitely inferior to the power of God itself. And we should also bear in mind the immense extension in late years of even our natural powers by natural means, such as the telegraph particularly ; for if so much can be done naturally, how much more supernaturally ? And if great men here on earth have been able to attend, simultaneously, as it would seem, to many times as much business as the ordinary man could manage, why cannot the saints in heaven even far surpass them ?

Another consideration must now be added. We must remember that the saints in heaven see God face to face ; as St. Paul says (I. Cor.

xiii. 12): "We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known." They can then, without the interposition of other means, know directly what God knows, so far as it pleases Him to reveal it to them.

And besides all that has been said, we must all acknowledge that even if the saint does not know of each prayer that we make, asking his or her intercession, at any rate God knows it; and He is pleased with the honor shown to one who has been His friend in life, and is many times more His friend now; for He knows that this honor is not intended to shut out the honor due to Himself any more than the good opinion which we have of a holy man on earth does. Why, then, should He not grant Himself the favor which He knows that we are asking, even more readily when these friends of His are invoked, since He knows that it is not accompanied by any distrust of His own goodness and mercy?

But there is one thing more to fall back on. You say that kneeling is too much honor to pay to any one but God Himself.

Now, this idea is one which perhaps would hardly occur to any one but an American, or a citizen at any rate of some republic, where one shakes hands with the chief magistrate,

and calls him plain "Mr."; the subjects of monarchies, even of constitutional ones, are accustomed to a good deal of ceremony in the presence of princes, even going so far as genuflexions. But we Americans do not like these obeisances, and feel that we can have all due respect for authority interiorly without showing it in this way.

Probably we are in a great measure right; at any rate there is no doubt that these ceremonies of earthly courts may proceed merely from human pride, and in any case that the interior is vastly more important than the exterior. God Himself infinitely prefers a contrite and humble heart to any amount of exterior posing. But still the interior naturally suggests the exterior; if one really feels interiorly abased, it is likely that he will feel like taking a humble position of body, and will do so unless some principle restrains him; unless he thinks or believes that it would be wrong for him to do so.

The question then is, Is it really wrong to kneel before any one but God? If it is not, surely we can be allowed to do so, if we like. We are not forced to do so, unless by refusing we disturb the peace and quiet of an assembly, as would be the case if a person should insist on standing up in a Catholic church because the prayers happening to be said at the time were addressed to the Blessed Virgin or some

saint. If any one objects to kneeling in church he has an easy remedy; he can either quietly leave the church, or he can at least remain seated.

Well, then, to come to the point, if it is wrong to kneel before any one but God, we ought, if any account can be found in the Bible of any one kneeling before a holy man or an angel, to find that he was told not to do so. But in fact it is just the other way.

We find in the first chapter of the second book of Kings (we call it the fourth book) an account of several messengers being sent by the king to Elijah (or Elias, as we call him, and as your Bible also does in the New Testament). The first two did not treat the prophet with much respect, but ordered him, in the name of the king, to come down from the hill where he was. The result was that they, with the men they had brought with them, were consumed by fire from heaven.

The third learned wisdom from the fate of the others, and coming to Elias, "fell on his knees" before him (v. 13) and begged him to spare his life. Was Elias angry now at the "idolatry" on the messenger's part, and punished him (or rather, did God punish him? for of course Elias had in himself no such power) for his showing too great reverence, as he had the others for showing too little? By no means. On the contrary we find (v. 15) that "th

Angel of the Lord spoke to Elias, saying, Go down with him; fear not."

We also find (II. Kings iv. 27 and 37) that the Sunamite woman offered similar homage to Elisha, falling at his feet, and that the prophet would not have her corrected or disturbed for so doing.

Let us look now at the tenth chapter of the book of Daniel. We find there that Daniel, as he was standing by the bank of the Tigris, suddenly saw a magnificent and terrible angel; and that at the sight of him he fell on the ground in a faint. The Angel roused him from this, and set him on his knees and hands, and spoke a few words to him; he did not rebuke him for this, as it were, slavish position, but actually placed him in it. As, however, he wished to inspire him with confidence, and to remove his terror, that he might listen attentively and intelligently to the words which were to be said, he then told him to stand; and Daniel stood trembling, evidently much preferring to remain in his more humble position. There is not the least hint that Daniel believed that he was seeing God Himself; the vision was in fact that of an angel, or as the prophet says, it seemed to him of a man (v. 5); still he was afraid to stand upright before one whom he recognized as a representative of God. And certainly Daniel, a man most specially divinely

enlightened even among the prophets. You have known if it was wrong to kneel, and would have got on his feet of his own accord.

Now, let us look at the instance given in the Revelation (or Apocalypse, as we call it) of St. John. It is true that there the angel at whose feet St. John fell (xix. 10) corrected him from the adoration he was about to give, and said, "See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Adore God." But this was plainly because St. John thought that Jesus Himself was standing before him; and wished to pay him divine honor interiorly, as well as the exterior obeisance. It may be observed also that we are not told that the angel ordered St. John to change his bodily position, which he had already assumed.

These instances, together with one which I am about to mention to illustrate what I shall shortly say, are all that occur to me in the Bible as proving anything on this matter, one way or the other. And for our side, one instance is sufficient. If it is essentially wrong to kneel before an angel or a man, it cannot be right under any circumstances, whereas it may be right in itself, but wrongly intended in some cases, and therefore reprobated in those cases.

But the fact is that the worship given by

Catholics to angels and saints, and expressed by kneeling or other outward signs, though not, as seems clear from the above texts, essentially wrong to be paid to them simply as exalted beings, specially honored and beloved by God, is really to a great extent a worship of God Himself; of His divine majesty and perfection as shown in them. It is because they represent God that we specially honor them, as one honors a king or a nation in the ambassador as representing that king or nation. To bring this out clearly, let us again turn to the Bible (Gen. xviii.) We shall there find that the Lord appeared to Abraham as he was sitting at the door of his tent. The vision was in the form of three men; this has been generally supposed to represent the Holy Trinity. Abraham went to meet them, and "adored down to the ground," as our version has it. Yours says, "bowed himself toward the ground." But, at any rate, it is clear that he was paying God honor in their persons, whatever position he assumed; for he said, "My Lord, if I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant." It is also, however, plain that he did not regard them as being simply God, but as representing Him, for he offered to wash their feet, and asked them to eat bread, and to rest under the tree; just what he would have said to any honored human guests.

It is, then, in some respects, a worship to God that we pay when we honor His saints, in whatever way we may do it. And it is not on account of their excellence in themselves that we honor them, but on account of their nearness to Him, and their showing forth of His divine perfections.

And experience shows that, so far from our hearts being estranged from God by our honoring the saints and praying to them, it is, as a rule, those Catholics who are most devout to the Blessed Virgin and the saints who also love God the most, and give the surest test of that love by being willing to make and actually making the greatest sacrifices for Him.

I have said a good deal about the matter of exterior reverence, because our actions in this way are so much misunderstood. But it is clear, if we think of it reasonably, that of itself the matter is not an essential one. If it were essentially necessary to be always kneeling when speaking to God, not only would most Protestants be much at fault, but the prayers of all of us would be much restricted. There is nothing in the exterior actions of worship which is strictly necessary, or which has any *absolute* significance; all really depends on the interior spirit and intention, which expresses itself in different, but not necessarily or even possibly, in adequate exterior forms.

Now, in connection with this matter of the veneration of the saints, I want also to speak of another closely related to it; and that is, the value which we place on relics.

Really this is nothing peculiar to Catholics. We have only to visit any museum to see the attraction which there is for people in general in the relics of great or celebrated men, and even of those who have been noted for bad lives. The coat or writing-desk of Washington or Napoleon is looked at with great interest, and many would be glad to pay a high price for such an article; and so they would, quite likely, for a piece of the rope with which some notorious criminal was hung. It is true that there are some who do not care about such things; but I think they are the exception, and by no means the rule.

The feeling cannot, perhaps, be logically reasoned out and accounted for, but it is there all the same. It is really hard to conceive how a Christian could possibly be indifferent to, or uninterested in the seamless garment of our Lord, or the crown of thorns which was placed on His head at the time of His Passion; or that he would not wish very much to have a portion of either of these for his own. If he would highly value a lock of his mother's hair, or any other souvenir of one who had been so dear to him, is it possible that he would be indifferent

to a memento of One whom he professes to love more than father and mother. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." says our Lord Himself (Matt. x. 37) how, then, can a Christian be indifferent to the relics of his Saviour?

And if we love Him, we love also in a special way His friends, those who are nearest and dearest to Him; His Mother, His foster-father St. Joseph, His Precursor St. John Baptist, His beloved disciple St. John the Apostle, and the other Apostles to whom He said, "I will now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends"; also the holy martyrs who laid down their lives for Him, and the saints who, more perfectly and completely than Christians in general, took up their cross and followed Him. So in a similar way we prize and treasure mementoes of them, as we would His own.

The only difference, then, which one would expect to find in this matter of mementoes and relics, as also in that of pictures and statues, between the Christian and the heathen would be in the persons in whom interest was thus shown. And this is the difference we do find. The world has pictures and statues of its great ones; of great rulers, military leaders, statesmen, poets, inventors in the arts and sciences, and it values their relics; the Christian has his

pictures, statues, and relics of those who have been distinguished in the matter which he must needs regard as of paramount importance—that is, the love of God.

But you will say, “It is all well enough for Catholics to care about relics of the saints” (and why not for Protestants, too?), “but what we object to is that they attach a superstitious veneration to them. They think that the possession of a relic will insure their salvation.”

I do not deny that there is a possibility of superstition in this matter; but there is always a danger of any religious conviction running into superstition, and the only way to certainly guard against this is to extinguish the religious feeling too, and indeed to deny the supernatural altogether; but one cannot take this latter course and remain a Christian at all, unless one can be considered as a Christian who simply regards Christ as a great and good man. But the Catholic Church always labors to prevent and discourage this tendency to superstition, not to increase and encourage it.

The occasion for it lies in something that we cannot get rid of, unless we are to get rid of the Bible itself. For the Bible tells us that God has been pleased to work miracles and confer great blessings by the means of relics. We find (II. Kings xiii. 21) that when a dead body was put into the sepulchre of Elisha, “and

touched the bones of Elisha, the man came to life, and stood upon his feet."

We find also (Matt. ix. 20-22) that a certain woman came behind our Lord "and touched the hem of his garment; for she said within herself, If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed." And she was healed. Our Lord did not call her act superstition, but faith; He said to her, "Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."

Again (Acts v. 15), we find that the people brought the sick into the streets, and placed them so that Peter's shadow at least might fall on them; and it would appear from the next verse that even these were cured. And (Acts xix. 12) that "there were brought from his body" (that of Paul) "to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them."

May I ask, why, if such things happened then, they should not also happen now? That they do happen, we have the most ample evidence. But more about this later.

Of course, the Catholic Church understands, and teaches her children, that miraculous favors given by means of relics, or in any other way, are primarily for the glory of God and of His saints, and do not come as a matter of course, or infallibly, by the use of certain external means; and also that they must, as a rule, be

accompanied or even preceded by good and holy dispositions on the part of those who receive them. But human frailty or wickedness does not always attend to this salutary teaching, and abuses these supernatural gifts, losing the benefit of them, as it does also with the natural gifts and blessings of God; but that is not the fault of God, nor is it that of the Church, which labors to remove and prevent these dangerous and scandalous errors.

But now you have another objection. You say that there is a vast amount of fraud about this business of relics; for example, that there are more relics of the true Cross than would make a great many crosses of that size; and that this fraud is endorsed by the Church.

I will ask you to take the example cited, and make a simple calculation on it. I think you will allow that the cross was probably equal in bulk to a beam of wood 200 inches long, 6 wide, and 4 thick, which makes 4,800 cubic inches. Now, an average relic of the true cross would not exceed a piece 1-10th of an inch each way; indeed, this would really much exceed the average. But even at this, you see we would have 4,800,000 such relics, or one to every fifty Catholics. But one to every thousand would come nearer to the proportion of those who actually have them. Indeed, this would be a considerable over-estimate.

Again you will say, " But they have the head of such a saint preserved in several different places. Here is certainly an unblushing and obvious fraud."

You make this objection because you do not understand our way of speaking about these matters. Catholics understand well enough that by the head is meant a portion, perhaps a notable portion, of the head. This is enclosed in a reliquary representing a head, and you imagine that the whole head is supposed to be there; but no one except yourself who sees it thinks of any such thing.

That there should be, however, some mistakes about relics is obviously unavoidable, and the unscrupulous, no doubt, will attempt frauds, and sometimes succeed. But the Church has always taken great care, and takes more and more every year, to prevent this; and does not give certificates of genuineness, or "authenticity," as we call them, to any relics without careful examination by competent and learned officials.

I think you will see that there is nothing unreasonable about this devotion; but if any Catholic does not take interest in it, he certainly is not obliged to. Nor is any one required to pray habitually to the saints, as long as he does not object to it on principle; and to fail to ever do so would seem to imply such an

objection, as, for instance, if one should refuse to say a "Hail Mary" now and then; for this prayer has the highest possible sanction, both directly by the Church and by Catholic feeling and practice; and to ignore it could hardly mean anything but heresy on the part of the person so acting.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REMAINDER OF THE PROFESSION.

THE remainder of the profession is principally occupied with matters which have already been discussed. I have already treated at some length of the great and decisive authority which we attach to the Scriptures, or the Bible, and the way in which we believe that this Word of God should be read and understood.

By the "Apostolic and Ecclesiastical Traditions" is understood the traditions which have come down to us, by word of mouth or by uninspired writings, with regard to the faith of the Church. That these are of value, and are recognized as being so in the Bible itself (II. Thess. i. 14), where we read: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our

epistle.” Also (II. Tim. ii. 2) we find: “And the things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also.”

It is perfectly in accordance with reason, common sense, and the necessities of the case, to say nothing of the actual facts of history, that the teaching of the faith in the first few centuries should have been mainly oral, and that tradition should have been, as it actually was, the main guide of the faithful, especially during the ages of persecution. In later times we do not depend on it so much, as the Scriptures are so easily accessible, and the decisions of the Church so abundant.

The profession now proceeds to include generally the other matters of faith resting on the decrees of the Church, specially those made in the General Councils. Of these twenty-one are recognized, as follows; the places and dates are given:

1.—Nicæa or Nice I.,	.	.	A.D. 325
2.—Constantinople I.,	.	.	“ 381
3.—Ephesus,	.	.	“ 431
4.—Chalcedon,	.	.	“ 451
5.—Constantinople II.,	.	.	“ 553
6.—Constantinople III.,	.	.	“ 680-81
7.—Nice II.,	.	.	“ 787
8.—Constantinople IV.,	.	.	“ 869-70

9.—Rome (Lateran) I.,	. A.D.	1123
10.—Rome (Lateran) II.,	. “	1139
11.—Rome (Lateran) III.,	. “	1179
12.—Rome (Lateran) IV.,	. “	1215
13.—Lyons I.,	. . .	“ 1245
14.—Lyons II.,	. . .	“ 1274
15.—Vienne,	. . .	“ 1311
16.—Constance,	. . .	“ 1417-18
17.—Basle,	. . .	“ 1431
18.—Florence,	. . .	“ 1439-45
19.—Rome (Lateran) V.,	. “	1512-17
20.—Trent,	. . .	“ 1545-63
21.—Rome (Vatican),	. . .	“ 1869-70

These councils were composed of bishops gathered from all parts of the Catholic world. All Catholic bishops are invited to such assemblies, and have a vote on the matters discussed. The last two are specially mentioned in the profession as treating of matters more controverted now by Christians in general. The Council of Trent was called on account of the Protestant Reformation; it defined the dogmas of faith which were impugned by the Protestants, and effected various reforms in the matter of Church discipline; there were corruptions and evil practices which had crept in, and really needed reformation; and this true reformation of the Church was thus legitimately and quite thoroughly effected.

The Council of the Vatican was opened by Pius IX. on December 8, 1869; it was adjourned in the following year on account of the troubles of the times, which culminated in the seizure of Rome on September 20 of that year by the troops of Victor Emanuel, King of Italy. In this council various matters concerning the primitive truths of religion were defined against modern infidelity, and the infallibility of the Pope, as it has been explained above, was solemnly declared.

In assenting to and accepting the decrees of these councils, and therefore, also, specially on account of the decision just mentioned, the decrees of the Pope himself when he solemnly and formally teaches the faith to the Christian world, we simply make a logical and reasonable act. It is not necessary, in order to accept and believe what God teaches us by the means which He has established, that we should know precisely what it is that He teaches. We believe it beforehand, just in the same way, but with a far higher degree of certainty, as a jury believes in the testimony of a witness of unimpeachable character, before he opens his lips to give it.

It is, however, the desire of the Church that we and all the world should know just what our faith teaches us on every point. Our Divine Lord committed His doctrine to His dis-

ciples secretly, but He instructed them to proclaim it publicly. "That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light," said He; "and that which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the house-tops."

This the apostles did; and though for a time it became absolutely necessary, on account of persecution, to observe some secrecy (for Christ Himself had said, "Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turning upon you, they tear you"), such is not the case now. There is nothing which we need or wish to keep back of what we believe, either with regard to Catholic faith or practice; and in what follows I propose to explain some points which have not been spoken of in this profession.

Before proceeding to these, however, I wish to remark on some words which may give a false impression in the concluding sentence, in which it is said, "I detest and abjure every error, heresy, and sect." By this is meant not that we detest any person who does not embrace our faith, or detest any sect in the sense that we hate the persons belonging to it; but that we detest heresy—that is, we hate the falsehood which is contrary to the truth, and also the spirit of denial of what one knows to be the truth, for that is heresy, properly so-called;

and that we detest the separation of what Christ said should be "one fold and one shepherd" (John x. 16), into various bodies out of harmony with each other and with separate institutions and governments, as being a thing in itself wrong and displeasing to God; but not that we hate the individuals who have been unfortunately in this way alienated from the visible communion of Christ's Church.

I shall also now treat of the opening words or preamble of the profession which you remember I passed by at the natural place. Some part of what has been said in the course of our explanation seems to be properly required to understand this preamble fully; or at least we are now better prepared to understand it than we should have been then. It propounds a doctrine which gives difficulty to many; that is, that "no one can be saved without that faith which the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church holds, believes, and teaches."

Now the question is, what precisely is meant by this? It certainly seems plainly contrary to what, as has been said before, we must admit as an evident fact; namely, that the holy patriarchs, prophets, and saints of the Old Testament have always been believed to have been saved, and probably many others also, who lived in those times, when they could not possibly have held this faith, for the very good

reason that it had not then been made known to the world. So that they do not come under the general statement made here.

But if we examine, we see at least that we need not concern ourselves with this seeming difficulty, for it is only said "no one can be saved," not "no one ever could have been saved." It is, then, at any rate only a question of the way in which we can be saved at the present time.

But it has been already shown, in our discussion of the article of the profession concerning "everlasting life," that there can hardly be a difference between those who are now living entirely out of the reach of the Catholic Church, and those who lived before our Lord came down from heaven. For both the Catholic faith is equally impossible. And the same may be said for those (and there may be a good many such) who, though they have indeed heard that there is an institution called the Catholic or Roman (perhaps they have known it as the Romish) Church, still have no suspicion whatever that it can possibly be the true Church established by God on earth. All these people, whether the obstacle, so to speak, between them and the Church be time, space, or a prejudice for which they are in no way to blame, are said to be in "invincible ignorance" of the true faith, and we believe that they may

be saved, if they are faithful to the light and the means of grace they have, even if these are not sufficient to bring them into the true Church before they die.

What is meant, therefore, by saying that no one can be saved without the faith of the Catholic Church, is not that an explicit knowledge of this faith is absolutely necessary, but that no one can presume to dispense with it, to take something else in its place, or to say, as so many do, that it makes no difference what a man believes, as long as his life is right. This last idea, plausible as it seems to many, is obviously absurd; for it assumes either that a man's life can be right when he is indifferent as to whether he knows or does God's will or not; or that it is impossible there can be any truth revealed from heaven to show us how to live, and that all the information needed on that subject is not only attainable by our reason but even actually now in the possession of every human being. One might as well say, "It makes no difference whether a sea-captain has a compass and sextant or not, as long as he makes a straight track for the port he wishes to reach." Very true, no doubt; but how is he going to lay his course correctly unless he has the instruments which enable him to do so? If he has lost his instruments, or is unable to procure anything of the kind, God may be merci-

ful to him and bring him safe to port without them; but to say, "I don't care about instruments, I can get along all right without," is simply fool-hardiness. Just so it is fool-hardiness for any one to say, "I can save my soul without the faith of the Church, and I don't care whether it is true or not." If he, through the fault of his ancestors, has lost sight of the faith altogether, or if he has always lived in some remote part of the world to which it has not penetrated, he may be saved like the ignorant mariner, by a special mercy of God; but this special mercy cannot be expected if, when the faith is attainable, he neglects to avail himself of it. He is then like the captain who, passing through the city where instruments can be got, neglects to procure them, though he has the money in his pocket.

So you see that what is meant by saying that no one can be saved without the Catholic faith, is substantially the same as saying that no one can reach his port safely without instruments. No one can be saved without it; that is, no one can be saved who wilfully rejects or neglects it.

But it must also be said that salvation is difficult for those who, even without their own fault, are deprived of the faith, just as navigation is difficult for the seaman even without his fault, deprived of what he needs, or success improbable in any handiwork without the proper

tools. For one inculpably ignorant of the faith, though not punished for that, is yet necessarily deprived of the great aids which it furnishes for the forgiveness and the prevention of sin in general. He is, like other people, conceived and born in original sin; ordinarily this is only removed by baptism. Christ Himself says: "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). Still, the Church believes that those for whom baptism is practically impossible can be saved if they have sufficiently perfect dispositions, loving and turning to God with their whole heart. This we call the baptism of desire.

But even should original and actual sin be taken away in this manner, still the temptation to sin remains, and the weakness to resist which original sin, and perhaps actual sin also, has caused. This is the case with baptized Christians also, and with Catholics as well as others. A battle, it may be a long and a hard one, has to be fought with sin before the kingdom of heaven can be won. But the Catholic in this battle is helped and fortified by the Sacraments, to which the unbaptized have no access, and of which the Protestant is practically ignorant. For we believe, and facts which we cannot properly discuss in a book of

this kind justify us in believing, that there are no valid clerical orders among Protestants properly so-called, except in some rare instances; the Protestant, then, even though he be validly baptized, has no access to the Sacrament of Penance; and indeed few Protestants make any endeavor to avail themselves of it. If then, after once receiving the grace of God he should be so unfortunate, as is only too probable, to fall into mortal sin, it must be forgiven him without this great help; this is indeed possible, but it is comparatively difficult, as will be seen more clearly later. Then there is for him no Real Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist to strengthen him and give renewed life to his soul. "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you," says our Lord (John vi. 54); and though no one can well hold that salvation is impossible without the actual reception of Holy Communion, still no doubt it is for Catholics practically necessary for the nourishment of the soul, for the extirpation of vicious habits and the formation of solid virtue, and for perseverance to the end, on which everything depends. And if it is so for Catholics, why not for others as well?

Again, the Protestant has no Sacrament of Confirmation by which to receive the permanent grace of the Holy Ghost, to make his faith solid

and firm against the assaults of the enemy ; no Sacrament of Extreme Unction, to prepare him for his last combat. He has to leave the world, as our great poet says, "unhouselled, disappointed, unaneled" ; how many chances are against him, even though he be in perfectly good faith about his religion, and trying to do his very best !

These difficulties of which I have spoken do not exist to the same extent in those churches which, like the Greek and other Oriental ones, have retained valid orders, and have, except in what would now be considered by people in general as matters of small consequence, the same doctrine as the Catholic Church. What separates them from us is principally what we call *schism*, for which their individual members can hardly, as a rule, be to blame, and which moreover has not deprived them of the means of grace established in the Church. Russian soldiers, for instance, were attended by French priests in the Crimean war ; they had always been accustomed to receive the sacraments, and expected them at the hour of death as they had during life.

You see now, I think, what is meant by our saying that no one can be saved without the faith which the Catholic Church teaches. Principally that no one can be saved by some so-called faith or opinion which he selects for

himself, knowing or suspecting that the Church established by Christ proposes something else to him ; secondarily, that without the means of salvation placed in the Church by Christ, salvation is extremely difficult. And it would be even more difficult probably than it actually is, were it not that to those who are without any fault of their own deprived of these means of salvation, God in His mercy makes the combat somewhat easier, as it would seem ; taking away from such, perhaps, some of the temptations to which they might otherwise be exposed, or, as we may say, "tempering the wind to the shorn lamb." For He "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I. Tim. ii. 4), at least so far as it is morally possible for them.

There is another article in this preamble which is likely to give difficulty ; that in which it is said, "I am ready to observe all she commands me." To the consideration of this we will devote a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH.

AS you read the words just mentioned, "I am ready to observe all she commands me," I should not be at all surprised if they suggested most unpleasant ideas. They really must seem, to one having the usual prejudices against the Church, to mean that every Catholic must be ready to undertake any duty which it may please the Pope, or the bishop, or any one else who is his lord and master, to assign him to. He might be required, for instance, to blow up the Capitol or the White House, or to poison his own father or mother; very well, if the Church commands this, these words would seem to settle the question. He would have, if we take them in the sense in which they might easily be taken by Protestants, to go right to work and do what he was told, without any fuss or scruple.

But though this idea may seem natural enough, in reality it is nothing but a monstrous bugbear. Catholics would be amused at any such sense being taken from the declaration or promise of which we are speaking. For every Catholic man knows that there is no such

personal authority which issues special commands to him. The priest of his own parish is the nearest approach to such an authority ; but whatever commands he has to give are given out in public in the church, and are simply instructions or requests to join in some good work which is on foot, in which every one should help according to his opportunities.

You will, however, say that at least the priest gives injunctions of a personal character in the confessional. This is true, of course. But the commands or directions there given have reference only to the good of the soul of the penitent ; they are either to the effect that he must give up his sins, or the occasions of sin—that is to say, the places, persons, or occupations which are causes of sin to him ; or they are the prescribing to him of certain prayers or pious works by way of what we call penance, to be offered up in atonement or satisfaction for sins, according to what has been said in the previous chapter on purgatory.

Now, I know all this may be very different from your idea of the relation between priest and people. You are accustomed to regard the people as being what Protestants call “ priest-ridden.” The fact is that it is really the other way. The people are not priest-ridden, but the priest is people-ridden. He is, if he have any relations with the people at all, pretty much at

their beck and call, without any time he can call his own; it is they who are issuing their commands to him, to go on this or that sick-call, to hear and advise them in their troubles or in their business, to baptize their children, or to hear their confessions. The priest, especially in any large city parish, is really the slave of the people; bound to attend to the interests of each and every one of them at all hours of the day and night, and getting in return a salary which only just suffices for his maintenance, and which no man, even though unmarried like the priest, would think of working for if he had the ability and education which a priest necessarily must have.

This is really the whole fact of the matter in a nutshell. But it is a simple matter of fact, not deducible from any principle; it might be the other way, and probably would be the other way were the Church not a divine institution, animated and operated by the Spirit of God, which can and does inspire man to make sacrifices which he could not make naturally. To prove, then, that it is a fact, I can only give you my own testimony, which is also that of others who know what the state of the case is. And I do not say that there have not been, or that there are not now exceptions to what I have given as a rule. Sometimes a priest, in spite of his holy calling, may be worldly; and

he may be ambitious and tyrannical; and if he wishes to be so, he has some opportunity, on account of the love and respect which good Catholics have for the priesthood, though he cannot carry such conduct far without correction from his bishop. But that in any case, by his own authority or that of his superiors, he issues special orders to the laity, employing them either individually or collectively in the nefarious schemes which exist only in the Protestant imagination, is utterly untrue and absurd.

But the matter must, as I have said, rest on testimony. If you will not take that, it can be settled in no other way except by your coming into the Church yourself, and seeing for yourself how things are. So, having done all I can to remove this false impression, I will proceed to give you the true meaning of these words in the profession of which we are speaking. It may be observed, however, that they do not require the convert to do all that the *priest* tells him, but only what the *Church itself* tells him; so if you are not sure, after all, that what I have said is correct, there is at least this to fall back on.

Now, then; what does the Church command us? Only a very few and simple things. They are commonly called by Catholics the "precepts of the Church," and they are as follows:

1. To hear Mass on Sundays, and all holy days of obligation.
2. To fast and abstain on the days commanded.
3. To confess our sins at least once a year.
4. To receive the blessed Eucharist at Easter.
5. To contribute to the support of our pastors.
6. Not to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times; nor to marry persons within the forbidden degrees of kindred, or otherwise prohibited by the Church; nor clandestinely.

A short explanation of these precepts will now be in order. 1. The first regards the sanctification of Sundays and holydays. It is a fixing with precision of the matter commanded in the Decalogue. As the commandment stands there, it is, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." The manner of keeping the Sabbath holy among the Israelites was principally by abstaining from work. Besides the Sabbaths, other holy times were designated by Moses (Lev. xxiii.), namely, the pasch or passover, the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. To these others were subsequently added by the Jewish Church or Synagogue; and besides the abstaining from work, sacrifices and other religious observances were enjoined.

Now, the precise times to be sanctified and the manner of the sanctification have evidently been much changed in the New Dispensation. One thing especially is manifest, that by the general consent of almost all Christians, the first day of the week is the one now to be kept holy, not the seventh, as formerly. We observe Sunday as the day for worship and for rest, not Saturday, as in the Old Law. Evidently, also, the sacrifices enjoined by the Old Law are no longer offered. It is clear, then, that unless some great and horrible mistake has been made, which can be hardly regarded as possible, these changes have been made in accordance with the will of God, and by competent authority. This authority Catholics believe to have been that of the Church of Christ; and as nothing is recorded in the Scripture as having been distinctly arranged by our Lord Himself in the matter, we are really obliged to rest our present observance practically on the word of the Church, as contained either in distinct documents or in ecclesiastical tradition.

It is, then, somewhat strange that in the face of these manifest changes, acquiesced in by almost all Christians, Protestants should still make so much of the letter of the Old Testament with regard to this matter; that they should call Sunday the Sabbath, and maintain that everything regarding the Sabbath must

now be observed on Sunday. And it is strange still that they should have added a tradition of their own, forbidding any sort of recreation on that day, when it is not recreation, but work that was prohibited in the Old Law. The natural meaning of work is something which is laborious or tiresome; if we stretch it farther than that, we must, unless it can be interpreted in some way for us, conclude that every movement of the body or exercise of the mind is work, and then the only thing left is to go to bed.

And we do not find in the Bible that even religious observances of any kind are enjoined on the Sabbath. It was evidently fitting that there should be such, and such was the reasonable interpretation made by the Jews of the law of Moses; but taking the letter of Scripture, as they involve work, they also should have been omitted.

The fact is, that the Church of the Old Law construed and interpreted this commandment, though it is clear that its interpretation, or at least that of the Pharisees, was too strict, since our Lord Himself disregarded and condemned it in various instances, as in curing the sick on the Sabbath day, and plucking and rubbing the ears of corn (Luke vi. 1). It also, as we have seen, instituted new holydays (Judith xvi. 31, Esther ix. 27-28, I. Machabees iv. 59). Though the record of these is not in all cases

what you would accept as the Word of God, still it is unquestioned history; the last feast, moreover, is mentioned in the New Testament (John x. 22).

If, then, the Church of the Old Law had and exercised these powers without reproof except for a too strict and rigorous interpretation, why should not that of the New Law have a similar authority?

It has simply followed in the footsteps of the Synagogue in its action. The greatest change, or new departure, was in the substitution of Sunday for Saturday, in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, intimated (John xx. 19, and Acts xx. 7, I. Cor. xvi. 2), and adopted by Christians generally. It has definitely formulated the way of observance of Sunday, or given us the commands of Christ in this respect not recorded in the Bible; and if its regulations as to this matter are not binding on us, nothing is, as those of the law of Moses have necessarily disappeared with the change of the day. It has established new feasts in honor of the principal events and mysteries of our Redemption, as the Synagogue of the Jews did for the principal events of God's providence toward them. What reasonable objection can be made to all this?

It is now time to see just what the Church does prescribe concerning Sundays and holidays.

First, as given above, the attendance at Mass on these days. The Mass, as has been explained, is the great service of the Church; it is eminently fitting and proper that this should be one selected as of obligation. This is all that is absolutely required in the way of worship on these days; it is, however, the desire of the Church that Catholics should spend the rest of the day in a pious and religious manner; and particularly that they should also attend the afternoon or evening service known as Vespers. But experience shows that more than the attendance at Mass cannot be prudently commanded under pain of sin.

How, then, is the rest of the day to be spent? In the first place, servile work is to be avoided. By this is meant fatiguing labor of the body, such as most men have to perform during the week to procure their daily bread. Mental work, such as reading or writing, is not forbidden; neither is artistic or scientific occupation; and it is immaterial whether compensation is or is not expected for what is done. But one is not allowed to do servile work for satisfaction, for exercise, or to pass away the time; this is as much forbidden as that done for pay would be. Recreation or play, if it be innocent, is allowed; but it should not be such as would interfere with the public worship of God, or with the peace of those who wish to spend the

day in prayer or quiet; nor should it be such as would produce excitement or fatigue. The Church is always opposed to noisy and exciting festivities, particularly on Sunday, and of course to intoxication, debauchery, or any amusement which would probably be an occasion of sin. All these latter things would be wrong on any day, but especially on a day which should be spent in a closer union with God.

Work, however, required by necessity, piety, or charity is allowed; such as the cooking of food, the daily care of the house, preparation for public worship, attendance on the sick, etc. It is unavoidable also that some should work in order that others should be able to go from place to place for reasonable recreation or necessary business; and also, some must do so because the work in which they are engaged is of a character that cannot be altogether suspended, as the care of furnaces which cannot, without great loss, be allowed to go out. And no one is obliged to suspend work if by so doing he would lose his occupation and have to starve. It is a misfortune that such should be the case with any one; but as things actually are it evidently cannot be helped.

Of course, excuse for one's regular work on holydays other than Sundays is much more common, as abstinence from it, unless the

country were all Catholic, would be probably attended by danger of losing one's occupation altogether. All are expected, however, to hear Mass on those days, if a Mass is provided at an hour at which they can be present without great inconvenience. And no one should do servile work voluntarily or unnecessarily on those days any more than on Sunday.

In this country there are only a few such days through the year; namely:

1. New Year's day.
2. Feast of the Ascension of our Lord.
3. Feast of the Assumption of the B. V. (August 15).
4. Feast of All Saints (November 1).
5. Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the B. V. (December 8).
6. Christmas Day.

The first and last of these are pretty generally recognized as public holidays. The addition of the four others to the fifty-two Sundays of the year makes really very little difference.

2. The second precept of the Church concerns fasting and abstinence. These are two different things, though often confounded, even by Catholics.

By "abstinence" is meant abstaining from flesh meat. All the world knows that the regular practice of good Catholics is to abstain from meat on every Friday. The only excep-

tion to this is when Christmas falls on that day of the week. This Friday abstinence is of course, in commemoration of the death of Christ, which occurred on that day. It is manifestly fitting that Christians should undergo some suffering on the day on which Christ's great sufferings were endured.

Protestants are not usually inclined to admit this, however, alleging that it is useless, superstitious, and presumptuous for us to afflict ourselves in this way, and that it derogates from the dignity of our Saviour to have us put ourselves in His place in this way. This at least seems to be their idea in opposing it. But in this they are contradicted by Christ Himself; His words are given in Matt. ix. 15, Mark ii. 20, Luke v. 35. When He was asked how it was that His disciples did not fast as the Jews did, He said that as long as they had the bridegroom (that is, evidently, Himself) with them, they could not fast; but that the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them and that then they shall fast. And such was actually the case from the earliest ages of the Church. Afflicting the body by deprivation of food and other means is no modern invention; on the contrary, it was practised much more in the beginning of the Church than now. St. Paul bears witness to this most clearly when he says (I. Cor. ix. 25-27):

“Every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things, and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty : I so fight, not as one beating the air. But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.”

In these words of St. Paul we see the idea of what Catholics call bodily mortification. It is different from that of penance or satisfaction, of which I have already treated. It is this: that most of our temptations to evil come from the lusts or desires of the body; that our sensual appetites rise up in rebellion against what our souls know to be right and reasonable. The body endeavors, so to speak, to assume the mastery over the soul, and too often succeeds, as, for example, in the lamentable case of the habitual drunkard. It must be compelled, therefore, to take its proper place, as the servant, not the master, of the soul; and the only real way to do this is to deprive it of even what it might lawfully have. The experience of man shows that unless the body is sometimes deprived of lawful enjoyments, the soul will not be able to refuse it unlawful ones. It must be accustomed to obey simply for obedience's sake.

Those Christians who have a strong desire

for God, and wish to pass much of their time in prayer and union with Him, find this mortification necessary in a higher degree than the Church requires it to be practised. For the body, even though kept in reasonable subjection, is still with its various needs and demands a burden and a distraction to the soul, and the more these bodily needs can be lessened the better. The soul gains at the expense of the body. Holy men at all times have found that by treating the body with great severity its demands can be much lessened, and it can be made indifferent to many things it naturally craves; its tastes and its daintiness can be overcome, and the soul be thus freed to a great extent from attending to its wants.

We may put the matter in another, and really a more correct way. For after all it is not the body of itself and alone that desires satisfaction or pleasure; it is the soul which desires bodily pleasure, and often prefers it to that which is higher and better. By resolutely turning from the lower pleasure the soul is weaned from it, and the appetite and desire for the higher is strengthened in it. The soul must have something to desire; and the more it turns from the world and its pleasures, whether bodily or otherwise, the more it desires those things which the world cannot give or take away; the less it seeks the creature for its

own sake, the more will it seek the Creator. This is the underlying principle of all mortification, which may be applied to riches and honors as well as to bodily needs.

But to resume our explanation of the particular precept of the Church of which I am treating. By "fasting" is meant in general the deprivation not of some particular kind of food, like meat, but the taking less food than the appetite craves. As specially formulated by the Church, it is the restricting ourselves to one full meal, instead of taking three in the day. In the strict rule of the fast, no breakfast or supper is allowed; this, however, has been so far relaxed as to permit a supper of eight ounces weight, and a cup of coffee or tea with two ounces of bread in the morning. The fast also properly includes abstinence from meat; but in Lent dispensation is generally given for meat several times a week at dinner.

Those who are sick, or who have to work hard, those under twenty-one or over sixty years of age, and some others, are excused from fasting; excuse from abstinence is much more difficult, as this can generally be observed without detriment to health or unfitting one for work.

3-4. "To confess our sins at least once a year"; this is the third precept of the Church. More frequent confession than this is recom-

ended by the Church, but yearly confession required by this positive command ; so that he who has committed grievous sin, and passes over this time without confession, which must of course also be accompanied by repentance, commits a distinct sin by this, in addition to those which may already be on his soul. As, however, confession is usually followed by Holy Communion, this and the following precept, that of receiving the Eucharist at Easter, practically fall into one, that of making what we call the Easter duty. The precept, as you see here, reads "at Easter" ; but as it would be impossible for all to receive Communion on that exact day, the time is extended, according to the regular law of the Church, a week on each side ; in this country we have a still further extension, namely, from the first Sunday of Lent, six weeks before Easter, to Trinity Sunday, eight weeks after Easter ; so that a time of fourteen weeks, or more than a quarter of the year, is allowed here for this duty. Every Catholic of an age to receive Communion must receive at some time during this period, no matter how often he may have done so at other times during the year that has passed. I say "every Catholic of an age to receive Communion" ; and here it will be well to say a word to remove a false impression that Protestants naturally have. With them only cer-

tain persons, perhaps a small proportion of the congregation, are communicants ; but with it is not so. Every Catholic is, by the right of his or her baptism, usually received in infancy a communicant ; and is expected to make his or her first Communion in childhood, usually about the age of ten or eleven, and to receive regularly after that ; once a month is what is expected.

Many, however, do not receive as often ; that, especially after they have been thrown into the temptations and distractions of the world ; neither, of course, do they go to confession. And too often we find Catholics who neglect even the yearly Easter duty of which these commandments treat, and that year after year. Protestants do not seem to understand this ; they take for granted that every Catholic goes to confession regularly, and then ask how is it that they confess their sins and still go on committing such grievous ones as, of course, are known that some Catholics, as well as others, do commit. They seem to think that a drunkard, a thief, or one living in evident impurity, if he be a Catholic, goes to confession just as assiduously as any one else. In fact, such a proceeding would be almost unheard of. Any Catholic living in sin which he has not really made up his mind to abandon would not get absolution if he did go to confession, unless he imposed on

e priest by a pretended repentance ; and such hypocrisy is very rare, for Catholics have a horror of making a bad confession or Communion. Of course there are some who are really struggling against sin, who do go to these sacraments with some frequency ; but next to none go with a conscious purpose to remain just as they are.

That many should keep their faith, and remain in the Church, though making no attempt to lead a Christian life, was distinctly predicted by our Lord, in the parables of the wheat and tares, and the net cast into the sea, gathering together all kinds of fish, both good and bad, which are recorded in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel. Attempts to found or carry on a church consisting only of good people can only result in hypocrisy.

Please, then, before you blame on the Church the scandalous conduct of any Catholic, find out whether he goes to the sacraments regularly or not.

5. "To contribute to the support of our pastors" is the fifth precept. It is plain that the clergy must be supported in some way, as they are not allowed to undertake any business which can supply them with an income. In Catholic countries they are sometimes paid by the State, which, of course, makes them really supported by the people ; but in this state of

things there is no special application of this precept to the conscience of the individual Christian, as he will be obliged to do his share without thinking of it. But I need hardly say that here there is no such provision, and it is probably best that there should be none. Its place is supplied by the collections taken up in church. These collections and the rents paid for seats have, however, also another object, that of providing for the ordinary running expenses of the church, or other undertakings connected with it, such as the parochial school. Every one is evidently bound in conscience to contribute to these collections, whether ordinary or special; both on account of justice, for no one can have a right to occupy a seat paid for with other people's money, and also on account of charity, for every Catholic is, of course, bound in this way to help on the good work of the church generally, though some part of it may be of no immediate benefit to himself.

A great deal of nonsense is often talked about priests being grasping and avaricious, about their always talking about money, etc. It is perfectly plain to any one who knows anything about the matter, that priests do not want the money for which they ask for themselves, but for the work of the church. They are not obliged to carry this on by their own private means, even if they were able to do so; but as

a rule they have no such private means, for priests seldom come from rich families. The people must then furnish them with the money required for the expenses of the church and of the diocese, also that which is needed for the poor and for charitable institutions, and for foreign missions; to say nothing of what is required for the building of churches and schools, or other extraordinary expenses. People generally hardly realize how great these expenses altogether are, and fail grievously in respect of this precept, which, after all, is not so much a precept of the Church as an obligation coming from the very nature of the case. Putting a few pennies on the plate of a Sunday, which is all that some people in comfortable circumstances do, is very far from being a fulfilment of this obligation; to do no more than that is certainly for such a grievous sin of omission.

It is true, however, that this commandment is, to some extent, complied with by the offerings which are customarily made on the occasion of baptisms and marriages. These are not required by the priest as a condition of performing the ceremony; still, they cannot be considered as simply voluntary, as without them the revenue of the church would not be sufficient.

6. The last precept concerns the matter of marriage. By "solemnizing marriage" is

meant having what is called a "nuptial mass," or indulging in notable festivity or display on the occasion; marriage itself is not absolutely forbidden at the times which are proscribed, though the custom of Catholics is not to enter on it at these times without a grave reason. The times are from the beginning of Advent to the feast of the Epiphany (Jan. 6), and from the beginning of Lent to one week after Easter.

With regard to the degrees of kindred, the Church forbids marriage between people as nearly related as what are called third cousins. It also has established other prohibitions to explain which would occupy too much space, and also probably lead to misunderstanding; the only safe way for parties intending marriage is to notify the priest in time, in order that he may examine into the special circumstances of the case. In most of the cases in which marriage is prohibited, it is also considered invalid by the Church; so that the matter is evidently one of the greatest importance.

What is meant by marrying clandestinely is being married by any other person than the priest of the parish to which the parties belong; two witnesses are also required, that the marriage be not clandestine.

Now here, you see, we have what is meant by "being ready to observe all that the Church commands me." These precepts or regulations

which have been given are evidently only such as would be expected to be made by any organization of which one is a member; they do not compare in number with those made by the State, which are generally submitted to without a murmur. And, as you see, there is nothing of a personal character about them; they bear equally on all, with due regard to the different circumstances of individuals. They are simply laws, such as any well-ordered community must have; and the wonder is not that they exist, but that they are so few and easy.

In this matter, of course, I am speaking of the obligations of the laity. The clergy are under much more strict control. Not only are there many laws specially for them, restricting their freedom of action, but they are also subject to personal direction from superiors, from which the laity are practically exempt. This is evidently necessary for the proper discharge of their special duties; but it is a matter which need not concern any one else; and no one can enlist in their ranks without knowing the obligations which he is incurring.

But it should be distinctly understood, that both laws and precepts made by superiors of any kind, either in the Church, the State, or family, do not bind when they are evidently contrary to the dictates of conscience. And it must also be remembered that the Church does

not claim infallibility for herself or for the Pope in matters of law, precept, or government generally, but only in formal decisions concerning faith and morals. So that if—though it is really a practically impossible supposition—the Pope were to order any Catholic to commit murder or any other crime, the command would not be considered as having any binding force, but would rather be an evidence of insanity on the part of him that would issue such an order. And the same would, of course, also apply to any bishop, or superior in a religious order, issuing such commands to his subjects. No one would think for a moment that any obligation was attached to them.

I think we have now discussed all the principal matters requiring explanation in the profession of faith which has made our text. As, however, there are other points which give difficulty to many, and occasion of criticism or of objection to the Church, it will be well to devote some space to the consideration of at least the more prominent of these.

CHAPTER XVIII.

INDULGENCES AND DISPENSATIONS.

IT is probable that there is among 'Protestants a more obstinate—for I really must say so—and a more complete misunderstanding on the point of Catholic doctrine named first in the head of this chapter, than on any other. I say "obstinate"; for the truth on this point has been stated so repeatedly that it seems impossible that it should not have been, at least to a great extent, accepted in the Protestant world by this time, had it not been for a firm determination not to accept it, and to regard us as either deceivers or deceived regarding it. We find the word "indulgence" continually understood by Protestant Christians, and even stated in their books, as being a permission to commit sin. In itself this misunderstanding may not be so extraordinary or unnatural; for indulgence, in the common English sense, certainly does often mean an allowance or permission to do some things which would otherwise be against the rules. We generally mean by an "indulgent" father, for instance, one who does not keep a very tight rein on his children, but allows them to do various things which a more

strict one would forbid. And we also mean by "indulging" ourselves, allowing ourselves pleasures which, if we were very conscientious, we should avoid. When we indulge ourselves, it is understood that we turn aside somewhat from the path of duty.

But the word indulgence has another sense, too. A father would also be called indulgent if he, while making strict rules for his children, and appointing punishments for their infraction, should be moved by compassion for the children so as to remit some portion of these punishments, and try to correct their faults by love and kindness rather than by fear and severity.

Now, this latter is the idea attached to the word indulgence, in the sense in which it is used by the Church.

To understand it more clearly let us look into the facts of history.

In the early days of the Christian Church severe penalties were appointed for those who fell into grievous sins, especially when those sins were public and scandalous. Of course, these penalties or penances could only be inflicted after the repentance of those who had sinned; for while still continuing in their sin they would not submit to them. The most common ones were in the way of fasting, which might continue with more or less strictness for

years. A long time also intervened in some cases before the offenders could be restored to the full communion of the Church; and they were required to remain also in a separate place by the door at public service. It is hardly necessary to go into details concerning this matter; still a few examples may be given to show the rigor of this ancient discipline. Its rules were too numerous for us to do more than take a specimen here and there.

1. If any one shall do any servile work on a Sunday or holyday, he shall do penance three days on bread and water.

2. He who breaks the fast in Lent, for each day shall do penance for seven days.

3. He who curses his parents, shall be penitent forty days on bread and water.

4. An usurer, three years, one on bread and water.

5. An adulterer, five to twelve years, according to circumstances.

6. A mother guilty of infanticide, twelve years.

7. If any one shall swear falsely through avarice, he shall sell all his goods and give the price to the poor; and entering a monastery, do penance all his life.

Of course these were different in different parts of the Church, and at different times.

As time went on, and the fervor of the faith-

ful became somewhat relaxed with the greater prosperity of the Church, it was found impossible to get these severe penances performed, and it became evident that if they were still insisted on, the effect would be to prevent repentance rather than to insure its being thorough and sincere; so, naturally, a true zeal for the salvation of souls required a reduction of their rigor, and that for them some easier works of penance should be substituted. This substitution of the easier for the more difficult was known by the name of an indulgence. At the present day it is found impracticable to enjoin much penance beyond what the second precept of the Church, which has just been explained, requires, except to those who are exceptionally pious and fervent; so that the prayers and works which have taken the place of the old canonical penances, and which are now called indulgences or indulgenced prayers and devotions, are, as a rule, very easily performed.

They are divided into two classes, plenary and partial. The plenary indulgence is attached to certain works, usually somewhat considerable, though no more than can be performed by any one really anxious to satisfy for his sins, and is understood as making such works an equivalent for all that ought to be done in that way; the partial, to works or prayers less in amount. Partial indulgences

are given as covering a certain space of time, as a year, forty days, and the like; by this it is meant that they are substituted for the canonical penance which would formerly have been assigned for that length of time.

Now, one thing about this matter must be specially noted. As with the old penances, repentance is supposed to precede. Every Catholic knows perfectly well that it is of no use to try to get an indulgence while he is in the state of mortal sin; if he be in that state, he must go to confession first, and get into the state of grace and friendship with God by a hearty repentance and a real abandonment of his bad life; then, if there be any indulgence to be had, as usually happens at the time of a mission, for instance, he may hope to get the benefit of it, to satisfy, to some extent at least, for the temporal punishment still remaining for his sins.

But, as a general thing, it is only pious and good people, who go to the Sacraments regularly, who make any effort to get indulgences, unless on special occasions like that mentioned above. These good people have long ago repented of their sins, if indeed they ever had any mortal sins to repent of; at the same time, they have not the courage, or perhaps the strength, to undertake any severe penitential works; so they try to get the benefit of these commuta-

tions for the penance which their more heroic ancestors used to do, and which some do even now.

Now, you notice that this whole doctrine implies a special efficacy in the way of satisfaction for forgiven sin, attached not merely to penitential works in general, but particularly to those appointed, and blessed, as it were, by the Church. As the old canonical penances were regarded as more salutary than anything one could do of one's own accord, so these which are substituted for them have a like value. And it is also plain that, in theory, a work or prayer to which an indulgence of a hundred days is attached is the equivalent of the old penance performed for that time; but as it is confessed that the actual benefit derived from this indulgenced work or prayer depends largely on the fervor with which it is done or said, it is plain that this actual benefit of an indulgence is likely to be less than that of the old penance; for to perform the penance required of itself a good deal of fervor, while to perform the work to which the indulgence is attached requires of necessity very little. All devout Catholics instinctively feel this, and therefore most of them, instead of being contented with one plenary indulgence, or a few partial ones, try to gain as many as they conveniently can.

Now, of course I am aware that objections

may be raised against the whole doctrine of temporal punishment for venial or for forgiven mortal sin, and also against the Church having the power of making any special form of such satisfaction specially salutary; but the main point about the matter of which we are now treating is that the whole doctrine of indulgences has reference to this matter of satisfaction, and that the idea of their being permissions to commit sin is something which never occurs to a Catholic at all. It is simply a monstrous delusion which Protestants have somehow got into; one which would indeed be ludicrous, were not the prejudice against the Church which it has created so lamentable.

It is hard, I know, for a Protestant to give up this, perhaps, his greatest charge against the Church; the one which he has seen over and over again stated as an historical fact, especially in connection with the Reformation. That Tetzel was selling permissions to commit sin, the price being a contribution to the building of St. Peter's Church, is something he feels as certain of as that Christ lived and died. But the fact about that matter was merely that Tetzel had authority to collect money for St. Peter's, as one might have nowadays for any church, the building of the church and the contributing to it being regarded, undoubtedly, as a good work; and that to this good work the

Holy See attached an indulgence—that is, it substituted this good work for the canonical penances, in the way that has been described. But, of course, no Catholic knowing his religion supposed that it would do any good in that way to any one who intended to commit grievous sin, or to any one who had not sincerely repented of all the grievous sins he had committed, and abandoned them for good.

So much, then, for this monstrous and almost inconceivable misrepresentation. The only way of justifying or accounting for it is, that at the time of the Reformation the matter of preaching and explaining the faith and practice of the Church had been somewhat neglected, so that many Catholics were ignorant, in a great measure, of what the Church taught; and though it is hard to believe that Luther, priest as he was, was among this number, still many could easily be persuaded, because they had not received much Catholic instruction, that an indulgence was something like what Protestants now imagine it to be. Still, it is not probable that this error took much hold in the beginning of the Reformation; but as people got more and more separated from the Church, and out of reach of its voice, the false idea developed and took firm hold of their minds.

And now a few words about a kindred subject, one often confused with the one of which I

have been treating. I mean the matter of dispensations, so called.

What is a dispensation? It is a relaxation of a law made by the Church, for some reason not sufficient in itself to excuse one from it. For instance, a person not sick enough to be excused by the sickness itself from abstinence on Friday, may be excused by the authorities of the Church; the law is dispensed or its obligation removed in his particular case. Evidently it is in the power of any law-giver to release any one or more of his subjects from a law which he has made; as he made the law, so can he also unmake it. And he can give permission to others, or delegate them, as we say, to dispense in this way in his name. In order, however, that a dispensation should be lawfully given there must, as I have said, be some reason for it, though not a reason enough in itself to excuse; also this dispensation should not cause an undue burden to fall on others.

But, it is plain enough that though a law-giver can dispense in his own law, he *cannot* dispense in the eternal laws of God, or the essential obligations of morality, for he did not make or constitute these. Dispensations, therefore, are never given by the Church in matters of morality; but only in those things which of themselves are indifferent, like that of abstinence on Friday, as mentioned above. Some

things, you see, are commanded because they are essentially right and obligatory, or forbidden because they are essentially wrong. Others, on the contrary, are obligatory simply because they are commanded, or prohibited merely as being against the law. As, for example, in secular legislation, there is no obligation in itself to pay tariff duties until a law is made to that effect, and one can walk freely over the grass unless it is forbidden to do so by some special regulation. It is in matters only of this latter kind that the Church gives dispensations; where she makes a law for the general good, which without her legislation would not be a matter of obligation. But in matters of the divine law she cannot interfere, except to interpret it where doubt may exist. She cannot say that any act is a sin against the divine law, and then give permission or dispensation for it, and she never does. If she could have done a thing like that, she could have saved England to the Church; but she would not grant permission or dispensation to Henry VIII. to marry Ann Boleyn when he was truly married to Queen Catherine; for both divorce and bigamy are prohibited by the law of God. Luther and his companions were willing to strain a point to please the Landgrave of Hesse, and subscribed a document to that effect; but the Catholic Church cannot do such a thing.

She will not allow the smallest thing, essentially sinful—even, for instance, the most trifling falsehood—for any consideration, however important.

Now one more matter, suggested by this, before we conclude this chapter. It is commonly said by Protestants that we, and especially the Jesuits, maintain that one may do evil that good may come, or that the end sanctifies the means.

It is curious that the same accusation was made in the very beginning of Christianity. St. Paul testifies to this: "And not rather (as we are slandered, and as some affirm that we say) let us do evil, that there may come good?" (Rom. iii. 8).

When St. Paul condemned this doctrine you believe that he meant what he said, I know. You do not suppose him to be a Jesuit; you do not think that he maintains a thing which in his heart he denies, as you perhaps believe the Jesuits do. And yet you see he was accused of this damnable doctrine, that the end sanctifies or justifies the means.

Precisely the same is the case now. The accusation made against us of holding this doctrine is one for which there is not the slightest shadow of real foundation; there is none whatever in the formularies or decrees of the Church, nor is there any in the writings of a

single Catholic theologian. On the contrary, Catholic writers on moral theology, in which branch of science the question would occur, unanimously reject it. The Jesuits, who have given special attention to this science, do so most explicitly. Such a doctrine is never taught by any one in the Catholic Church publicly or privately; unless it might be by some unlearned layman who had been made to believe by what Protestants say that such was the Catholic teaching, and thought it his duty to defend it as well as he could. No permission would or could be given in the Church to commit the smallest sin, even if the whole world could be converted to the faith by it.

The only thing that could possibly be mistaken—and that only by great stupidity or inadvertence—for such a doctrine is the common-sense judgment of theologians, that if an action has two results, one evil and one good, the evil can be permitted for the sake of the good, if the good is what is intended and is considerable compared with the evil. As, for instance, a military commander, engaged in a just war, can shell a town occupied by the enemy, though he knows that in all probability some non-combatants, women or children, will be unavoidably and unintentionally killed. He does not kill them as a means of killing the armed enemy; the latter is what he is trying to do,

the former happens simply because he cannot help it.

Do not then, if you value truth or justice, make this absurd charge against us. And now let us go on to some other matters, where perhaps there is more excuse for some misunderstanding.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONFESSION.

I HAVE already had something to say about the Catholic doctrine and practice of confession and absolution when speaking of the Sacraments, some time ago ; but as intimated then, the subject is such a prominent one and liable to so much misunderstanding, that it is better to give it a more full explanation.

The Catholic belief about this matter is, that all who commit mortal sins after baptism are bound by the law of God to confess these sins to a priest ; and that this confession, or rather the absolution which is usually given by the priest after it, is the ordinary way in which sins committed after baptism are forgiven. It is not doubted, however, that they may be forgiven without the ministry of the priest if the sinner has what is called perfect contrition ; that is, a true and hearty sorrow for sin *purely for God's*

sake, joined, of course, with a firm purpose of avoiding it for the future, and of doing everything which God commands. But as the Catholic firmly believes that God commands confession for all sins after baptism, as has been said—and this whether the sins have been already forgiven or not—it is plain that he goes to confession just the same in this case as in any other.

In most cases, however, it seems that the sorrow felt for sin is hardly pure and perfect enough to insure its forgiveness without absolution. With absolution a lower and less perfect sorrow suffices; but even in this case there must be a true and genuine repentance founded on motives of faith, such as the fear of punishment in the next life, not on mere worldly considerations. And there must be a real turning from sin as such, so that the sinner would not commit it, even though he should be told that God would not punish him for future sins, or—what is more practical and possible—that he would certainly have the grace of forgiveness later on. One who truly repents of his sins in a way to obtain forgiveness for them even with the help of the priest's absolution, must be so disposed that he would not go on committing them, even though he felt sure he would live ten or twenty years longer. It is to be feared, of course, that some who apparently repent and

confess their sins on their death-beds, or what they believe to be such, are not in these dispositions, but are merely influenced by servile fear, as it is called ; that they turn from sin not because they hate it in any way, but simply and solely because they dread its punishment ; that they would send away the priest instantly if the doctor told them they were sure to recover, and not think of calling for him again till they again seemed to be in a similar emergency. Such, of course, are not forgiven even if the priest gives them absolution, as he probably will on the chance, however doubtful their dispositions may seem to be.

You see, then, that the dispositions of the sinner must be satisfactory in God's sight when he goes to confession, and that otherwise, according to Catholic doctrine, he is not forgiven. And I hope you see and believe what every Catholic knows perfectly well, that it is not the idea of confession simply to wash out an old score of sins, and have a clean slate to start with more on. Some Protestants imagine this ; that the Catholic goes to confession simply to *report* his sins, and have a suitable penance assigned which will make the matter all right without further trouble.

And perhaps you imagine a still more scandalous and outrageous thing yet ; namely, that the penance is largely in the form of money

paid to the priest. It has even been said that we have a regular schedule of sins, so much being paid for the absolution of each. It is the same old idea as that about indulgences, except that the money is supposed to be handed over afterwards instead of beforehand.

It is simply utterly false. Nothing of the kind exists; indeed, it is in some dioceses absolutely forbidden to receive money in the confessional, though it may be due on some other account. But as for paying for absolution, it is a thing unheard of. There seems to be no essential reason why a voluntary offering should not be made on the occasion of confession, as well as on that of baptism or marriage; but as it would be likely to lead to some abuse and to give scandal, to say nothing of discouraging frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, which the Church has much at heart, no custom of the kind could be tolerated.

No, hearing confessions is on natural grounds a burden to the priest, and often quite a grievous one. This of itself would suffice to show that it is not a human invention, for there could be no possible inducement to the priesthood to institute a practice so full of labor, and putting such a strain as this does on patience, except the conviction that it was required by the law of God.

Of course it has its consolations ; for if there be " joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance " (or as your version has it, " one sinner that repenteth " ; both mean the same thing) (Luke xv. 10), so the priest cannot but be moved to joy when he sees a sinner turning to God ; and also he is edified and encouraged when he sees, as he often does, how pure and free from sin, and how exalted in virtue, many souls have become which have been in this very sacrament repeatedly washed in the blood of the Lamb.

One other mistake may be now mentioned ; it has been already alluded to in what has been said about the Pope. Some Protestants imagine that the priest himself does not go to confession, or if he does, that he confesses to the bishop, and the bishops to the Pope. This is all nonsense. Priests go to confession far more frequently than the average of the laity ; they are expected to do so once a week, as they are expected to receive Communion every day ; for of course they receive when they say Mass, and this they should do daily. And they go, as a rule, to each other ; and the bishop would generally confess to a priest ; even the Pope, as has been said, would do the same.

Another absurd idea prevails regarding this matter ; namely, on the notion just mentioned of priests confessing to the bishop, etc., it is

supposed that they report what they hear in confession to him, and he to the Pope. And yet every one ought to know that the obligation of secrecy with regard to what a priest hears in confession is most absolute, admitting of no exception whatever. A priest who was known to have broken this law would be immediately deprived of all right of exercising any office whatever in the Church; but in point of fact such a case is unknown. There is no authentic instance of this seal of confession being intentionally broken, even by priests who have lost the faith and left the Church; and even in insanity or delirium it does not appear ever to have been done.

There is another matter still upon which it seems necessary to say a few words, though they ought not to be needed; and every decent person must approach it reluctantly. It is the charge made against the Church that the confessional, so far from being a means by which souls are cleansed from sin, is made in practice a school of corruption, especially to persons of the other sex. This charge is made, as a rule, in the first place by certain apostate priests, who profess to speak from experience. Others make it on their authority. The simplest answer to it is, that if such is the experience of these priests, so much the worse for them personally; if there has been corruption in the confessional

in their experience, who but themselves can have been the parties guilty of it?

The sole foundation for any general charge of this kind is that, as all kinds of sins must be confessed, those relating to impurity cannot be excepted. It is then stated, as an obvious consequence from this, that what are called "obscene" questions must be asked, and in point of fact are asked, by priests of penitents.

I reply: to say that such questions, or that any questions at all, must necessarily be asked, is not true. If a penitent is able and willing to tell the sins which have to be told without questioning, so much the better. If, however, it is difficult, as it may naturally be, to do so, some questions may have to be asked to make it easier, and also to prevent matters from being stated which really are not necessary, but which the penitent may imagine to be so. But that such questions must be and are in fact obscene, is again a falsehood. As well might one say that a physician must necessarily be obscene in his treatment of patients, or that physicians, as a rule, are so. The physician has to treat diseases of the body; the priest, those of the soul; both, to do any good, must know just what is the matter; the cases are parallel. But neither need act or speak impurely or obscenely in doing so. What, then, but a malignant hatred of the Church can make

any one say that a respectable physician can be trusted, but that a priest cannot; that a physician, who often makes no pretence to be specially conscientious, will avoid sin, while a priest, whose conduct is otherwise blameless will commit it? The charge is not only one of sin, which no one makes against physicians as a rule, but also of most horrible hypocrisy and sacrilege; for the doctor is often nothing but a man of the world, while the priest receives and dispenses the Sacraments daily. What right have you to make such a hideous accusation? The priest's duty can be done with the greatest prudence and delicacy, as well as the doctor's; why should not he, as well as the doctor, do it in this way? It is simply monstrous to say that as a rule, almost without exception, he does or says anything in this matter which would be wrong.

I do not deny that there may be a rare exception here and there. One who never should have been a priest may take upon himself this sacred calling in spite of all the pains which are taken to prevent this; and having done so, he may abuse it. But we have a very strict law to provide for such cases. Every penitent of either sex to whom a priest in confession may have used words with an obviously corrupting and immoral intention is bound, under penalty of mortal sin and the refusal of absolution, to

denounce such a priest to his bishop; and any priest who is found to be really guilty in this respect is most severely reprimanded and deprived of his office. So that even an evil-disposed priest can only be guilty of such an offence by some incredible folly.

But, you may say, at least is not the priest's mind, even if pure at the beginning, necessarily corrupted by all the sins which he is obliged to hear, and which, perhaps, previously he was ignorant of? Strange as it may seem, I say it is not, and this for several reasons. In the first place, by a peculiar disposition of things, which hardly seems altogether natural, though no doubt it is partly so, a priest after hearing confessions, say for an afternoon or evening, really forgets almost all that he has heard. Sometimes if a person comes back who has been in the confessional only a little while ago, the priest has to make an effort, often an unsuccessful one, to remember anything about his case. One thing blots out another. Secondly, custom, making the hearing of sins more monotonous and tiresome, destroys the attraction they might otherwise have. Thirdly, sins are not told by sincere penitents in a way to tempt the listener. Fourthly, if some one should come with a pretended confession in order to produce such temptation, not only would the priest naturally be alarmed and horrified, but also he would

remember another point of the same law that has been mentioned, namely, that any exterior consent, though only verbal, to such an attempt would subject him to the same report being made to his bishop as in the other case.

I hope that what has now been said with reference to this nasty calumny and the unworthy suspicion caused by it will suffice. I regret that it should be necessary to say so much about it; but the gravity of the charge makes it unavoidable.

In point of fact, the influence of the confessional, outside of the supernatural benefit of absolution which we believe to be attached to it, is good both for priest and penitent. The former learns compassion for the weakness of human nature; also humility, for he sees how he also might have fallen into great sins had not God mercifully preserved him; also care in guarding against the occasions and temptations which have proved so dangerous to others. The latter frees his mind of secrets which were weighing on it; he knows the evil and the danger of sin better than before; he also knows the obligations of justice or of charity which he is under; he receives advice how to guard against sin for the future, and how to advance in the way of virtue. This last matter, which is known as spiritual direction, is the most

efficacious of all means for spiritual advancement.

We have a great abundance of treatises on the spiritual life, and these are, no doubt, of the greatest profit to the reader ; probably there are fifty to a hundred of such works among us to one which Protestants have. And what wonder ; for they have no fixed principles to start with, they are always discussing and changing their creeds, and never can advance to anything beyond. But a word or two addressed personally to one's self, and based on one's own individual needs, even if spoken by one who is himself only moderately advanced in learning or sanctity, is often more efficacious than a whole book. One piece of advice given by one who knows the heart and soul is better sometimes than a long talk from the best of friends who have not such knowledge, or than the most eloquent of sermons.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY.

AS we have been speaking about the clergy with relation to this matter of the confessional, this seems an appropriate time also to discuss another subject concerning them about which remark is often made; that is the one which forms the title of this chapter. Clerical celibacy is regarded by those outside the Church with feelings both of admiration and of dislike. No one can fail to see that an unmarried man is more absolutely free to attend to his work than one who has the care of a family; and also that he can afford to work for a smaller salary; so that a body of unmarried clergy can be supported with less demand on the money of the people than would be required were they married. It also appears pretty clear that if a clergyman is what he ought to be—determined, that is, to serve God faithfully, he not only can but will do so with less distraction to what may be called side issues than if he had a wife and family to attend to. I know that the Protestant idea is that a good wife is a positive help to a minister; that she will make him better and more zealous than he would be without

her. St. Paul, however, it must be admitted by Bible Christians, is something of an authority on this point; and he says: "He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided."

It may, of course, be urged that this disadvantage is more than made up for in other ways, at least for those clergymen who are regularly settled in the care of a parish. We hardly agree to this; still the Catholic Church does not exclude from her communion certain countries in which this custom prevails, and if Russia, which is such a country, were reconciled to Rome to-morrow, it is probable that this discipline would still be tolerated there. But there is not the slightest probability that the rule of celibacy will ever be changed in countries at present Catholic, or in Protestant countries like England or America.

And one word should here be said with regard to the married clergy of a country like Russia, and of other countries either united to the Catholic Church, or separated from it, which have a similar discipline.

The clergy of these countries are married before ordination; in other words, the candidate for Holy Orders is expected or even required to

be a married man, unless he belongs to a religious order, of which I shall have more to say shortly. Whereas, in the properly Roman system such candidate is expected to be unmarried, and must, if married, no longer live with his wife, though the bond of marriage remains unbroken. This latter plan has, however, proved objectionable, and at present is not allowed in practice.

But the Roman, Greek, and Oriental churches agree that a man cannot marry *after* ordination. So if the wife of a priest, whom he has married before ordination, should die, he is not allowed to marry again. This rule was observed from the earliest times throughout Christendom, though the special discipline of the Roman Church is of later institution.

So the taking of a wife by a priest, and especially by a bishop, *after* receiving his orders, was an innovation of the Reformers, not warranted in any way by Christian tradition. In the case of Luther and some others it was a double or triple violation of the rules of the Church, for Luther was not only a priest, but a monk; and the wife whom he took was a nun.

But to return to the consideration of the essential advantages and disadvantages of celibacy. I think that all will really admit, that for the efficiency of the clergy it is better on the whole than the state of marriage; the only

thing that seems in the minds of Protestants to be a conclusive argument against it is, that it produces immorality; that it is impossible, or at least highly improbable, that an unmarried clergy can be actually chaste and pure. In short, they regard virginity, at least in men, to be practically out of the question; that is the plain statement of the case.

This is, of course, an insult against the Catholic clergy; it is a deliberate accusation against us, not only of grievous sin, but also of most damnable hypocrisy; for that we profess to lead pure lives there can be no doubt. But furthermore, the charge, even abstractly made, is a direct denial of the words of Christ Himself. For we read in the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, that when those who heard the strictness of the law laid down by Him concerning marriage, said that according to this law it would not be expedient to marry (v. 10). He warned them against such a conclusion being taken as a general rule; "All men," He says, "take not this word, but they to whom it is given" (v. 11). But nevertheless he encouraged and advised some to adopt it; "He that can take, let him take it" (v. 12).

Now, these words were not said ironically; no one could think that. They were said seriously, inviting men to follow His own example.

I would advise you also to read the opening

of the fourteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John. He says: "I beheld; and lo a Lamb stood upon Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and the voice, which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the ancients: and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb; and in their mouth there was found no lie; for they are without spot before the throne of God."

I think I have said enough to show that no Christian can maintain that virginity is a thing practically impossible for men, even to be preserved through life; and that the hundred and forty-four thousand is meant to represent not an exact but a very large number is plain from another passage in the same revelation (chapter vii.), where the same number is represented as those saved among the children of Israel. Cer-

tainly that would be a pitiful proportion to attain salvation among all the hundreds of millions that will have lived of God's chosen people.

It is no more, then, than right Christian faith, as well as fairness and justice to your neighbor, to believe that in the mouth of the Catholic priesthood professing chastity as they do, "there is found no lie." Exceptions, there may be and no doubt have been in all ages of the Church; there was a traitor even among the Apostles. But that the very great majority of the clergy of the Church live as they claim that they do, is not only possible, but certain.

And the same thing is true of the religious orders, both of men and women. They, however, besides renouncing marriage and living in chastity like priests, also abandon the use of property by the vow of poverty, and the free exercise of their own wills by the vow of obedience. They make every possible sacrifice of what men value in this world; and why? In order to have a closer union with God.

I have said something in the chapter on the precepts of the Church concerning mortification; that is, the abandoning of the good things of this world for God's sake. The religious orders carry this to the highest degree. And let no one say that to do so is superstition; for it has the direct sanction of Christ. Read the last verses of this same nineteenth chapter of

Matthew which I have already called your attention to. You will find there an account of a young man who told our Lord that he had kept all the commandments, and Christ did not contradict him; but He said, "if thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." Peter, moved by this, and by what our Lord also said about the difficulty of salvation for the rich, said to Him: "Behold, we have left all things and followed thee; what therefore shall we have?" Christ made to him and his companions first special promises on account of their apostolic office; then He said; "And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake: shall receive an hundred fold, and shall possess life everlasting."

The same thing is related in the tenth chapter of St. Mark's gospel, and the eighteenth of that according to St. Luke. And the Christian who would maintain that our Lord does not encourage what priests and the religious orders practise, has really no resource but to cut these chapters out of his Bible.

In the beginning I have represented the celibacy of the clergy as if it were principally instituted for the sake of greater efficiency and exterior application to the work of the ministry.

But really its principal reason is that the priest by giving up special human relations of love, however good in themselves, may love God more ardently and be united more closely with Him ; and that his love of his fellow-men may be on this very account more intense and self-sacrificing, while it is at the same time more supernatural and impartial. And the constant experience of all Christian times shows that the experiment, if so it may be called, has been a signal success.

CHAPTER XXI.

MODERN MIRACLES.

ONE of the great objections to the Catholic Church in the minds of at least a good many Protestants, is that she claims that miracles are still worked within her pale.

Of course it is easy to see that those who do not believe in the Church would naturally doubt or deny that she had in any way a special gift or prerogative of miracles, for such a gift would be inconsistent, at least if frequently or abundantly manifested, with their theory about her ; it would seem to show, if admitted as a fact, that she was really a Divine institution. Naturally, then, Protestants must discredit Catholic miracles, or at any rate refuse

to admit that they are worked with the frequency that we claim. One or two, here and there, they might allow, just as we can allow are, or may be, worked outside the Church; as, for instance, Balaam had the miraculous gift of prophecy at least on one occasion (Numbers xxiv.) To show even more clearly that such may be the case, we find in St. Mark's gospel the following account: "John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him. But Jesus said: Do not forbid him. For there is no man that doth a miracle in my name, and can soon speak ill of me. For he that is not against you, is for you" (ix. 37-39). But the habitual or frequent working of miracles, especially in a permanent institution like the Catholic Church, or the working of miracles in attestation of a special doctrine, as that of Elias against the prophets of Baal (I. Kings xviii.) is a different matter altogether.

It is then natural, as I have said, that Catholic miracles, as we allege them to occur, should be disallowed by those outside the Church; and that—though it might be admitted that a few were genuine—they need not be examined into specially, as it would be deemed impossible that any great number of them could be well supported, or that they could have any special significance. And furthermore, it is natural

that Protestants should be indignant at our claiming that miracles are not infrequent among us; for this seems like falsely arrogating to ourselves a special mark of Divine favor.

Nevertheless, taking this ground cannot make the Bible Christian altogether easy. For, it is recorded in the sacred text that our Lord distinctly predicted that his disciples should work miracles. "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do. Because I go to the Father" (John xiv. 12-13).

The only Protestant way of accounting for this prediction not being verified at the present day—for that it is verified among Catholics cannot, of course, be supposed for a moment—is to take the ground that "the age of miracles has passed." Of course the Bible does not say that it was going to pass; Christ's words, given above, seem to apply to those who should truly believe in him in every age. But there is no other way out of the difficulty except that of believing what Catholics say.

So Protestant Christians are pretty well agreed on this view of the matter. But I am afraid that some of them are slipping away gradually to a somewhat lower ground. They accept the miracles of the Bible because they have always been accustomed to take them as a

matter of course; but they hardly realize them as facts. Not admitting such things as occurring nowadays, they are gradually coming to think that they could hardly have occurred then.

There is, it is true, a kind of reaction setting in lately in favor of the supernatural. Still, it has a hard fight to make in the minds of non-Catholics against the claim so loudly made by many scientists that the laws of nature are immutable. People have come, on account of this claim, to regard the laws of nature as being very much like those of mathematics, essentially inherent in the very nature of things.

Now, there is really no scientific basis—and here I speak as a scientific man—for this statement about the immutability of the laws of nature. All that scientific men can say truly is, that in the observations and experiments that they make they do not find these laws changing; that the apparent anomalies which present themselves have been found to be reducible to law, and that it is reasonable to presume they can always be thus reduced. But to say that it is absolutely certain, for instance, that one particle of matter will always attract another according to the law of gravitation, or other laws working regularly, is evidently to make matter independent of its Creator; it is to deny that God has any power to control or alter

the action of the creatures which He has made. It is really then to deny the existence of God; for the necessary idea of God is that He is omnipotent.

Now, of course, any man, scientific or otherwise, may, if he choose, deny the existence of an almighty God; but that such denial can be a scientific statement is simply impossible, for physical science—of course it is in that sense we are using the term—does not and cannot handle that question. All wise and prudent scientists acknowledge this, and confess that in their discussions they are only speaking of the existence and operation of various physical causes; that they cannot tell for certain from their investigations whether there be any cause behind these or not. The most they can say is that nature does not prove the existence of God to them; but to say that it disproves it would be absurd. They may say that God is unknowable on the lines on which they work; we need not inquire whether this is true or not; but so far they are speaking as scientists; that is, they are making a statement about the matter which is their specialty. But when they say that He is unknowable on any other lines, they are going beyond the bounds of their science; and when they say He does not exist, they are going a very long step further. They are talking as foolishly as one would talk who,

having lived all his life in a dark cellar, should announce as the result of his observations, that it was simply impossible there should be such an object as the sun. All he can rightly say is that the observations he has been able to make do not indicate anything of the kind; that he sees no reason to believe that there is anything brighter in existence than his gas jet or kerosene lamp.

Christians, then, need not be in the slightest degree affected by statements of this kind from scientists. We believe there is an omnipotent God; and it necessarily follows from this, that He can change the laws of nature if He chooses. You probably will admit that God can control the action of our minds, and compel us to think this or that; why, then, can He not direct or entirely change the action of a piece of brute matter, either permanently or temporarily, if He desires so to do?

But now I want to call your attention to a point generally overlooked in this question about miracles. And it is this; that what is truly called a miracle is not *necessarily* a suspension or change of the laws of nature at all. If that were admitted as the definition of the word, it would be hard to show that most of the miracles related in the Bible were truly such. Take, for instance, the passing of the Israelites under Moses through the Red Sea. It is not at

all necessary here to suppose that the laws causing water to seek a level were suspended; no more in this case than in the case where the waters are similarly divided by the hull of a ship as it passes along. In this latter case the laws are working all the time; but their operation is temporarily resisted by the pressure of the ship's sides. So all we have to suppose in the case of the division of the Red Sea is that a force like that of the pressure of a ship's sides acts on the water, causing it to stand up, as the Scripture tells us, "as a wall on the right hand and on the left."

Now, we know of no scientific apparatus which will produce such an effect without the introduction of a material visible object, like a ship; but who can say for certain that such an effect might not be produced by some invention yet to be made? To suppose, however, that Moses was in possession of such a scientific secret, would evidently be the wildest imagination. But to one who believes in the existence of mighty beings such as the angels are, according to the representations of Scripture, the problem presents no difficulty. If to four angels (Apoc. vii. 2) power was given to hurt the earth and the sea, surely to even one of them such a task as this would be very light, without having the laws of nature suspended at all.

Belief, then, in what is often and rightly called a miracle, simply requires belief in the existence of beings in themselves imperceptible to our senses, but able to produce effects which are perceptible, and whose forces are not exerted in obedience to any regular laws, in the sense in which we understand that term as applying to nature. The fact is that our own voluntary movements are of the nature of miracles, only prevented from being called so by the frequency of their occurrence. If only one of our species were gifted with the faculty of locomotion, the rest being stationary and incapable of movement except under the influence of external forces, like trees, the movements of this one would seem to the rest miraculous, especially if only seldom occurring. His arm should hang down by his side, in accordance with the law of gravity, unless raised by some other force acting according to law, that is, always in the same way in the same circumstances. But we should find that in the same physical circumstances it sometimes hangs down, sometimes is raised. If it was only raised several times in his life, the raising would be a miracle; we might—if it were possible under our supposed conditions—investigate physical laws for ever, but we should never be able to explain it.

To illustrate this further, let us now suppose the man's soul, which causes bodily movements

in some way that we are familiar with, but probably shall never be able in this life to fully understand, to be separated from his body; or in other words, that its usual way—whatever that may be—of operating on the body is at an end; in short, that the man is dead. Of course I am here assuming, as I have a right to do, that the soul can exist without a body. Now, let us suppose that a new way is provided in which it can operate on the body, so that the body gets up and walks, for instance; here we have a miracle. And yet its action on the body is no more reducible to purely physical laws before he dies, than it would be should it occur after death.

Now, what absurdity it would be in a scientist to maintain that such a thing could not possibly happen! He may say indeed, "I do not believe that there is any such thing as a soul, or at least a disembodied one"; but he knows perfectly well that he cannot prove this by scientific investigation. He is sure, or if he is not, everybody else is, that while he is alive and well he can raise his arm or not, as he chooses; how can he be sure, or make any one else so, that he cannot do so after his body goes through the change which we call death?

All he can say is, "Such phenomena have not come under my observation"; or, in common unscientific language, "I never saw anything of

that kind." But the phenomena which he observes in himself and other beings like himself during life, he knows perfectly well cannot be accounted for by physical laws; he would not be such a fool as to attempt to formulate laws by which it could be infallibly determined what his own or anybody else's actions would be for a single day. He may succeed in doing that for the clouds and the winds; but if he tried to do that even for himself, he would most certainly break them. Why, then, cannot a dead body, or any other mass of matter, perform actions unaccountable by physical laws?

The fact is, then, as has been said, that miracles may almost universally be accounted for by supposing the existence of beings acting voluntarily as we act, but disembodied and imperceptible to our senses, and possessed of more or less power over material things; or if we are indisposed to admit that—though no sound reason can be given for such indisposition—by granting the existence of one such all-powerful Being, who acts in and controls nature on certain occasions without breaking the laws of force He has implanted in it, any more than we break them when we so act in and control it frequently, as we actually do.

But, as has just been remarked, no sound reason can be given for restricting these extraordinary occurrences to the immediate action

of this one Being. And not making any such restriction is not only more reasonable, but it better explains what, in spite of some scientists, are really observed facts, which they would do well to heed.

It leads also to the classification of these occurrences into distinct groups. We find some in which, the interference with nature being directed to no good end, it would appear that the beings causing it are malevolent in their action, and are simply allowed thus to exert their bad will ; others in which there is a good end or effect, in which case it is to be supposed they are benevolent, and act in obedience to God, or with His approval ; thirdly, some in which it seems more or less clear that the action is that of God Himself ; as would naturally be inferred if it should seem that His laws of nature were in the instance suspended. For it is His own action which constitutes the laws ; His, therefore, it would be to suspend them. It is His to give power to His creation ; His, therefore, to take away that which it regularly and constantly exerts ; for it exerts it in immediate and constant dependence on Him, and it is not for others directly to interfere with it, though they may neutralize it by contrary action on their own part.

It is, of course, a difficult matter to tell for certain to which of these three classes a pheno-

menon occurs which cannot be accounted for by natural laws combined with human agency ; so that it is hard to be sure of the significance of such phenomena. It is a very dangerous mistake to confidently adduce those which can well be produced by evil spirits as foundations of a new religion, or testimonies to some particular doctrine ; that is plain enough. It is equally or more so to ascribe what are really the works of God or His angels to devils, as the Jews did in the case of the miracles of our Lord. " Dearly beloved," says St. John, " believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God ; because many false prophets are gone out into the world " (I. John iv. 1). It would be well if this advice was heeded by those who become interested in modern spiritism ; we frequently see persons who have scoffed at its " signs and wonders " as being mere humbug and trickery, become convinced, and on good grounds too, that such is not always the case, and then suddenly jump to the conclusion that the alleged truths which they are adduced to prove are really such. Simply that some spirit asserts some fact with regard to the future life is in itself no more a proof that it is really a fact, than that some man asserts some fact with regard to this life. The man may be a liar ; so may the spirit too.

The Church has tests which it applies for the

discernment of preternatural occurrences, visions, revelations, and the like. St. John indeed gives such a test in the very place I have quoted. He goes on to say (v. 2): "Every spirit, which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." This was applicable specially, and intended specially for, the lying spirits of his time.

I have said it is a difficult matter to discern the spirits; it is also a difficult matter to tell whether any spirit at all be concerned in the matter, for it may of course be merely natural. Here also the Church is fully on her guard.

Protestants generally imagine that the Catholic Church is extremely ready to accept apparent miracles worked within her pale as being really such, and to palm them off on the people. They think that we are really stuffed by the Church with miracles and legends. It is true that a great many have been reported in all ages of the Church, and are to be found in some books, particularly in the lives of the saints; but it is well understood by us that the Church does not make herself responsible for all such stories, or build in any way upon them.

The Church simply proceeds in the following reasonable way: First, she admits that supernatural or preternatural events, divine or diabolical, may occur at any time. To deny this is simply folly; Rousseau himself has said that

those who do so are only fit for a lunatic asylum. I would not go quite so far as that.

Secondly, as to the great majority of such alleged events she passes no judgment at all; she allows them to be told, and believed by those who choose to believe them, as long as they are not in themselves of an absurd or superstitious character. She also allows us to privately believe them to be of divine or angelic origin, as long as they do not tend to immorality or impiety.

But thirdly, when she is called on to pass a judgment as to their genuineness and their source, and to allow them to be used in her name as a proof of any doctrine, or of the holiness of any individual by whose co-operation they are said to have been brought about, she proceeds with excessive care and caution.

This principally occurs in the canonization of saints; that is, in the definite determination on the part of the Church as to whether or no it is certain that some person, one who has died with a reputation for great and extraordinary virtue, really was possessed of such virtue, and has therefore become in the next life specially near and dear to God; so that he or she can be confidently proposed to the faithful in general as a model for their imitation, and safely and profitably invoked by them as an intercessor before God.

On such occasions a most strict inquiry is made into the life of the person in question, not only by collecting testimony as to his good and virtuous acts, but also by trying to pick flaws in his virtue, to see if some weaknesses or imperfections cannot be found in his character or actions, not serious in themselves, but enough to prevent his being considered an eminent model of sanctity.

Inquiry is also made as to whether he performed any miracles in his life-time; but the most important thing is to ascertain whether any have been worked since his death as a result of prayers asking his intercession. Catholics are inclined to address requests for miraculous favors, especially for cures in dangerous illnesses, to such as they believe to have crowned an eminently holy life by a good death, and who, they think, may be already in heaven without having had to pass through purgatory.

It is necessary for the canonization of a saint that two miraculous favors should be clearly shown to be obtained after his death by his intercession. There are often rumors of quite a number, but most of these are dismissed as impossible of proof and unworthy of attention. The evidence for those which are examined is sifted very carefully, and every possible objection raised by an official specially appointed for that purpose, the ground being fought step by

step. Those which are rejected often have far more than the usual evidence which is deemed sufficient in a court of law. The result is convincing to all who do not take the ground, which has been shown to be absurd, that a miracle is impossible, and that no amount of evidence can prove it.

I trust that you see that in this matter the Church simply takes the ground of common sense. At least, if you were in the least degree familiar with the actual facts, you would see that it is absolutely certain that miracles do occur, in accordance with the promise of Christ, quite frequently among us ; but, of course, with the real miracles some false ones are mixed up. To prove the truth or reality of a miracle, it must be examined ; it is merely a question of evidence, when we once admit the possibility of it, as all sensible men must do, even though they may not believe in God. For to disprove His existence, and the existence of invisible spirits in general, free from the constraint of physical laws is, as has been remarked, simply impossible. It is hard enough in most cases to prove a negative ; in this case it cannot be done.

The Church does examine a miracle, when anything depends on it. The rest she does not definitely approve ; nor, as a rule, does she condemn them ; she lets them stand on their

own merits. Have you any wiser course to suggest?

I would advise you to look into the evidence upon this matter a little. This subject is so vast that of course I cannot begin to discuss it here, nor could it be treated in any one book. But for a beginning, perhaps, nothing better could be selected than the account of the miracles at the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, in France. These are quite recent, and going on at the present time; and books about them can be got at any Catholic book-store. If you read about them, you will have some difficulty in believing that "the age of miracles has passed." They are not legends, or nursery stories, but hard solid facts. If you once take up this subject in earnest, you will find that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

CHAPTER XXII.

SUPERSTITION.

CONNECTED with the subject I have been discussing is a general charge made against us, which I have already partially refuted. It may be expressed in this way. A Protestant will say: "I do not doubt that you Catholics are sometimes quite pious, especially the more intelligent among you; many of you probably worship God in spirit and in truth, nearly as well as we do; but such are better than their religion. The great mass of your people are chock-full of superstition; they think everything of holy water or a blessed candle, and believe that such things are going to save their souls; and the worst of it is, the Church encourages them in these ideas. Why, you will hear men, or even boys, among you cursing and swearing, and they think that makes no difference as long as the priest has put what you call a scapular round their necks."

Well, I do not deny that there are such things as holy water, blessed candles, and scapulars, nor that the Church approves of them, and wishes us to use them. But that

Catholics think more of them than of the commandments of God, or trust in them more than in genuine piety and virtue, I do deny altogether.

Every Catholic that has any instruction at all from the Church knows that his salvation depends entirely on one thing ; that is, upon his spiritual state at the time of his death. He knows that if he has committed mortal sins, and dies without repenting of them, he will go to hell ; but that if he has repented of them and been forgiven, he will go to heaven, though he may have to go to purgatory first.

At the same time he knows that certain means and helps for him to attain this end, to live well and to die well, have been established for him in the Church. First among these are the Sacraments instituted by Christ. But these are principally available for him when he is in the state of grace or the love of God ; they are mostly helps for him to remain or persevere in that state, not to get into it when he has lost it. Moreover, of these only one can be approached frequently or used habitually ; that is the great Sacrament of the Eucharist.

When he is in the state of sin—that is, when he has fallen into mortal sin, but has determined to repent of sin and turn from it—he has, it is true, one Sacrament ; the Sacrament of

Penance or confession. But how when he has not as yet the strength or courage to avail himself of this? Is he going to give up in despair or simply wait for God to change him?

You will say he can pray. Well, we say that too; in fact, we say there is little chance for him unless he does; and that if he pray faithfully and constantly, he will certainly get grace to repent in earnest. But cannot anything else be done to help him in this; to make it easier for him; to remind him of it? Cannot he be surrounded in some way with things that are holy, that will suggest holy thoughts to his mind?

The Church does not forget her children, even though they may be in the power of Satan for a time, and wandering off in the ways of sin. She is always going out into the desert, and trying to save the sheep that are lost. Hence she institutes certain means, something like the Sacraments, but which even the sinner, though still unrepentant, can use without fear of sacrilege, to make a bond between him and the grace which he has lost; a clew by which he can find his way back from the wilderness to his true home.

These means are what we call the sacramentals; just such things as you have been speaking of; holy water, blessed candles, scapulars, and the like. Take the scapular, for

instance. It reminds every Catholic of the Blessed Mother of God, who is also his mother, and has, as he feels, the love of a mother for him, even though he be a sinner, and on the way to ruin. It is to him like a locket with his own mother's hair in it, or some other keepsake that she has given him. Such a thing reminds the erring son of his mother's prayers for him, of the example which she gave him, and of the prayers which he himself once said as a child by her side. Is this superstition? If not, how is it superstition for a Catholic to keep on a scapular, even if he feels he is not worthy of it? The worst of it is that when he goes too far, he does even give this up.

I might speak similarly of the other things that have been mentioned. That even bad Catholics should have a devotion to them is not superstition, but a remnant of the faith and piety which they once had, and which they still hope to regain. All these things have their significance, and their association with what is good and holy; and what else, till he repents, can the poor sinner have? He does not think they will of themselves suffice; that is a mistake of yours.

However, these sacramentals have their other uses. They are not instituted simply for the purpose I have set forth. Good Catholics also use them; and, indeed, if they did not others

would hardly do so, for it would be a confession or profession of sin in themselves. And they are believed to have a special efficacy; that by being set apart and blessed by the Church for holy uses exclusively, they become specially helpful to all of us, as the Sacraments themselves are, though in a less degree; and that they become like everything else on which God has set, as it were, His seal—an object of dread to His enemies, the fallen angels.

The regular use of objects then, or practices, like the sign of the cross, blessed or recommended by the Church, is not superstition. Superstition is properly the assigning of effects without a reasonable cause; the adherence to, or avoidance of, certain practices in themselves senseless and unmeaning; or the endeavor to discover the future or accomplish some desired end by means evidently inadequate. To consult fortune-tellers is superstitious, if it is not even worse; so it is to believe in dreams; or to refuse to sit down with thirteen at table.

Now, of course I do not mean to say that no Catholics can be found who believe in things like these; but I do say that these beliefs are not distinctively or specially Catholic. Also I can tell you that the influence of the Church is always and uniformly against these or any other superstitions. Of course she does not succeed in rooting them out of the minds or of the prac-

tice of the faithful; but she does succeed in making them understand that these things are always more or less sinful, and in some cases grievously so. All that listen to her voice know that they are matters to be repented of, to be confessed, and to be abandoned; and that is a great deal more than most other people understand.

If you say, however, that Catholics are naturally more prone to believe such things than others of the same grade of education, because the habit of belief is so much more exercised and developed in them, I agree that it would seem as if such ought to be the case. But whether it be on account of the salutary instructions which they receive on this point, or for some other reason, it does not appear that such is in fact the case. Still, even if it should at any time be proved by accurate statistics that our people are slightly more credulous than others, it does not seem to me a very serious charge. It is better to be slightly superstitious than not to accept what God has revealed; it is better to believe a little too much than a great deal too little.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHURCH OPPOSED TO SCIENCE.

NOW we come to a charge which, if it were only true, would indeed be quite a serious matter. It is that the Catholic Church is opposed to natural science; that she has fought it all along tooth and nail, and only given up at one point or another where she was obliged to; that she still objects to it and resists it as far as possible; that she does not wish Catholics to become familiar with or to accept its teachings.

Is any reason alleged why the Church should take this attitude? Oh, yes! our objectors say that the reason is plain. If Catholics were allowed to study science, they would see the errors of their creed; they would see that what the Church teaches is contrary to the glorious discoveries of modern times, and they would give up their old benighted Church, and join in the march of thought. "And then how would the priests get their living?" some will go on to say; "they live on the ignorance of the people, and cannot afford to let them learn what science teaches."

Of course this last insinuation is an insult to us; it implies that the whole business of the Catholic religion, in the minds of its priests, is

to make money out of the people, not to make them better or to save their souls. But the first part, or the charge in general, is insulting as well. For what does it mean? It means that we know our creed is false, and will not bear the light of scientific truth to be cast on it; well, then, we are teaching and professing something which we know to be a lie.

People should think well before they make statements of this sort, even if they do make them in ignorance. Those who say these things generally are ignorant, for they do not know what the Church does teach; but they ought to get out of their ignorance and know what they are talking about, and not indulge in flinging mud at random.

Perhaps they will try to turn the tables on us and say: "Oh! we don't mean that exactly. We think you don't know exactly what science does teach; that you priests are somewhat in the dark yourselves, as you say we are. We don't doubt you are good men, but of course you are so occupied with your masses and prayers and ceremonies of one kind or another, that you are rather behind the times, and don't know all that science has lately discovered."

But that will hardly do either; for in that case, my scientific friends, why should we oppose it, as you say we do? If we really do oppose it; if we agree with you in saying there is

a conflict or an issue between science and religion, you have no reason to say we are ignorant of science. If there was a disagreement; if you maintained that science agreed with religion, and we said it did not, then indeed you might say we were ignorant of science; but the charge hardly works as things stand.

What I have just given, however, as a supposed case, is the real case, if we reverse the parties in the discussion. The fact is, that *we* maintain that science does agree with religion, and you say it does not. By making the statement that there is a conflict between the two, you expose your own ignorance, not necessarily of science, but of the Catholic religion.

"What is that?" you will perhaps ask. "Do you mean to say that the Catholic Church endorses evolution, allows that the human race may have been for millions of years on this planet, believes that what is called the soul of man is only a result of certain combinations of matter, etc.? Why, not long ago you yourself said something which would not square with this last conclusion."

I do not deny that I did. But let us see what I said just now. I said that there was no conflict between *science* and religion; but I do not mean by "science" all the crude or half-baked theories which scientific men may put forward. I do not blame them for putting them

forward ; theories, or what are called working hypotheses, are necessary means for the advancement of science. But no genuine scientific man claims that his hypotheses, put forward and intended to be used as a means of directing his own observations or experiments, and those of others, is the final truth. It is put up with the expectation that it will be to a great extent demolished, or even perhaps so battered out of shape that it will in the end be hardly recognizable.

Such, for instance, was the idea and the conduct of the immortal Isaac Newton, the perfect model of a truly scientific man, in proposing the theory of gravitation. He had shown, by a rigorous mathematical demonstration, the most conclusive thing possible, that the laws of Kepler which had been reasonably well proved to explain with great accuracy the motions of some of the planets of our system, and probably those of the rest, could in their turn be accounted for by a force emanating from the sun according to the law of gravitation. It was also probable that other bodies beside the sun exercised a similar force according to their masses. Some scientists, if they had had the good luck or the intellectual penetration to arrive at these conclusions, would have unhesitatingly announced as an unquestionable fact what Newton proposed as a hypotheses, that every parti-

cle of matter attracted every other, according to the law of inverse squares which we call gravitation. But Newton was not sure, by any means. Because things did not seem to come out quite right in the case of the earth and moon, he concluded that the law of gravitation would not of itself suffice. The difficulty really was, that the size of the earth had not been correctly measured; but as this was an observed fact, and his idea was only a theory, Newton concluded that the fact was right and the theory at least partially wrong. But some would have taken just the opposite course; they would have discredited the fact; they would have said, "The fact does not agree with the theory; it must be a mistake."

If Newton had felt this sublime confidence in himself, if he had not been so modest, he might have proved his theory a little sooner; he might have pushed forward the measurements which in the end proved him to be right. But he could afford to wait. He did not care about a personal success; what he wanted was that the truth should be ascertained; and that would come sooner or later. In the meantime he let his hypothesis stand, as a suggestion that might ultimately be of some service. But he expected that it would of itself be inadequate to explain all the facts.

Now, I do not mean to say by any means that

there are few scientists of the present day that have Newton's disposition. Perhaps few carry it quite so far ; and it may be better that they should not. But most of them have it substantially. They, at least those of them who are real explorers in science, collect their facts laboriously, and test the theories, which to direct their work they are obliged to make, by means of them ; ready to drop or modify the theories as soon as the facts shall so indicate.

Exceptions there may be and are to this among them. But the principal reason why so many things are generally believed in the present day to be discoveries or final conclusions of science which the real investigators and builders of science know are not so, is that there are a number of what may be called second-hand or second-rate men, who in lectures and popular books make statements of this kind. These men are in the foreground from the popular point of view ; they stand, as it were, at the door of the temple of science, within which its real votaries are hidden. These last are too busy, as a rule, to lecture or write popular books ; and if they did, their language would be so technical that they would hardly be understood. It is these middle-men, so to speak, who announce one thing to-day, another to-morrow ; it is they who are mainly responsible for the apparent change and shifting of scien-

tific results, which makes some people so distrustful of such results nowadays.

And among these men, there is unfortunately quite a large class, specimens of which may be found even among the workers themselves, who have a prepossession or prejudice against religion; who seize on, and take special pains to announce, any scientific conclusions, whether final or provisional, which seem to them to be in conflict with Christianity. They dwell on these with great gusto and emphasis; and take special care to let them soak well into the popular mind. If these results are subsequently modified so as to agree better with the doctrines held, or which they understand to be held, by Christians—as, for example, in the case of the recent trend of scientific research as to the antiquity of the human race—this modification is unnoticed or lightly dwelt on by these popular exponents of science, who take all the while the attitude of advocates rates than of impartial judges.

Well, then, as I have said, the Church has no quarrel with genuine science, with that which is legitimately directed by truly scientific methods to the attainment of truth. She cannot have such a quarrel; for she believes in the truth of what she preaches, and she knows, what all having the use of reason must know, that truth cannot contradict truth. But she has

a quarrel with those of whom I have spoken, who announce as certain truth what they ought to know well has not been proved to be so.

Nor does she prohibit any Catholics who are competent to undertake scientific investigation from doing so. She places absolutely no obstacle in the way of their penetrating into all the facts of nature as it stands, or of their considering the probable indications as to its past history, or of their weighing actual historical testimony.

She does, indeed, caution them against being swept away from their moorings to the known truths of religion by the temporary appearances of a science as yet incomplete. She warns them also that in working on certain hypotheses they will be only losing their time. In this she acts as Science herself does. The would-be scientist who insists on re-examining conclusions now solidly established, like those of planetary astronomy, is simply looked on by those who are better informed with a shrug or a smile. His talk is not noticed.

Also she warns those weak in faith, or intellectually incompetent, against venturing on what to them personally might be dangerous ground. And she may also, at certain stages of scientific inquiry, prohibit the general and indiscriminate reading of scientific works in some particular department, on account of the prac-

tical impossibility of discernment at the moment between the false and the true, the doubtful and the certain, the theory and the fact. Scientific men themselves, on purely scientific grounds, may often be of the same mind. It is well, sometimes, for those not competent to judge thoroughly of a subject, to abstain from meddling with it; it may do them more harm than good; give them more false and confused ideas than true and clear ones. Sometimes the words of the poet are specially applicable: "A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

I have now gone over, as far as space admits, this matter of the so-called conflict between religion and science. The difficulty has been much magnified by some of our scientific friends who want to force an issue. In point of fact, there are not by any means so many even apparent divergences between science and the Catholic religion as they, in their ignorance of the latter, suppose. Evolution, for instance, in quite an extended sense, is not condemned by Catholic dogma; when you assert that *man* was developed, soul as well as body, out of a monkey, that is quite another thing. Again, the Church is not committed to believe that the universe, or even this planet, was made in six days of twenty-four hours; nor that Adam lived just exactly so many years ago. If you say

the world grew of itself, or that matter existed from all eternity, or that man has been here millions of years ; that again is something quite different. But you notice that these things which the Church cannot accept are nothing more than mere hypotheses or private opinions, not scientific results.

Of course I cannot undertake here to explain the whole of Catholic dogma on the subjects which may also be discussed by natural science ; but I can tell you that no Catholic scientist well instructed in his religion finds anything in religion or science which tempts him to give up either.

And there are great numbers of Catholic scientific men, and have been in all ages. Catholics have perhaps not emphasized or cultivated natural science, in proportion to their numbers, so much as others ; they have more important matters to attend to. But they have by no means neglected it ; if you will look into the matter, you will find that the Church has furnished a great number of its brightest names.

One word more to those who have a strong belief in many of the doctrines of Christianity, but differ from us ; to those who are commonly called orthodox Protestants. The scientific enemies of religion do not direct their attacks much against you, for they know that Protestantism, on account of its multiplicity and

changeableness, cannot commit itself to anything; but they know that if they could beat down or really disprove one tenet of the Catholic Church, the whole structure would go to pieces. But let me tell you that there is no danger of that; we are not at all alarmed. The progress of science may disquiet you and make you think Christianity is untenable; that the head must abandon it, letting it take its refuge in the heart. But we are not disquieted; we know that it has never interfered with any of the dogmas of our faith, and that it never will; and if you were Catholics, you would know the same; you would know that the Catholic religion will always satisfy the requirements of the intellect, as well as the cravings and aspirations of the soul.

There remains however, very probably, an objection in your minds which I will put in definite shape. It is that the Church, by its decrees and definitions, at any rate impedes the freedom of thought; that those who have no faith at all, or those who are at liberty to change their opinions at any time, can pursue scientific study under better conditions, to say the least, than we can. This point has already been lightly touched on in this chapter; but as so much is often made of it, and in other matters beside those relating to science, it seems worth while to go into it somewhat more thoroughly.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CHURCH OPPOSED TO LIBERTY OF THOUGHT.

THIS is a charge which is very frequently made against the Catholic Church ; more frequently, perhaps, and more uniformly, than any other ; and that even by those who, on the whole, are very well disposed to us. Such a friend will sometimes say : “ I certainly envy you Catholics the peace and rest of mind that you enjoy ; it must be a great blessing to have some one who can and will answer for you all these questions which so much disturb all thinking men ; I sometimes wish that I could do as you do, and take the word of old Mother Church for everything ; but I cannot make up my mind to abandon my reason and my liberty of thought, for these are greater, better, and nobler things than peace and rest would be.”

Now, I do not want to use harsh terms, or speak contemptuously of any one ; but I must respectfully submit that this sort of talk, common as it is, and uttered by sensible people too, is really little better than nonsense. And I think, if you will consider the matter patiently for a few moments, you will see that I am right.

The word liberty has, and rightly has, an attractive sound to all of us ; the idea of liberty is one which we all fondly cherish, especially in a republic like this in which we have the good fortune to live ; it is an idea which we are ready to fight for and to die for.

But let us look at it more closely, and see why we value liberty, and object to its being restrained. It is because we look on such restraints as preventing us from acting as reason would dictate, or at least as seems to us best. When we see clearly that a thing is in every way injurious to us, we do not chafe at being prevented from doing it as we otherwise might, through ignorance or inattention. To take a plain example : a street is impassable for a time on account of some excavations which are being made ; the city puts up a barrier at each end of the part under repair, placing a physical obstacle to our going through. We drive up to the place in our carriage, and have to turn back and go some other way. Do we complain ? do we want to have liberty to drive up to the edge of the hole, and perhaps, if it be dark or the horse at all skittish, fall into it ? Well, hardly.

I think that will do for the matter of liberty of action. Let us now look at that of liberty of thought, which is our special subject just now. And let us take an example here also.

You know, I suppose, that we never see but one side of the moon. There it is month after month, year after year, with the same old familiar markings. If you don't know this, watch it carefully, and you will see that it is so.

Now, of course the moon has got another side; and we can't help speculating to some extent as to how that other side would look, though it really is not of much use to do so, for we have no data to go upon. Still, it is conceivable that some such data might at some time be obtained, enough to form some sort of opinion on; and, if they were, it would surely be very unjust to forbid us from forming such an opinion.

But now suppose that a way is discovered of actually seeing the other side, like the theoretically possible one given in Jules Verne's trip to the moon, by shooting a projectile round it from the earth, with people in the projectile. Probably we would not all care to make such a trip; but suppose that quite a number of reputable citizens had made it, and that some had even taken kodaks with them; and that their accounts and the photographs which they had taken all agreed.

Don't you see now that our mental position with regard to the matter has changed? Speculation can no longer be of advantage to us;

and we could rightly be forbidden, on the ground of waste of time, to speculate on a matter which is no longer one of opinion, but of ascertained fact. It has become a thing which we cannot rationally do or desire; nay, it has become even impossible for us to seriously speculate on the subject, or have opinions at all. We are forced, by the very laws of rational nature, to accept the credible and certain testimony that we have, and stop speculating. Our liberty of thought on this matter has gone.

Now, this is only a supposed case; but there are plenty of actual ones in our life all the time. A few years ago it was quite lawful to speculate as to the sources of the Congo River in Africa; but now that Stanley, and after him quite a number of others have visited them, we have lost our liberty of thought on this subject.

In fact, every step of the increase of knowledge, of which in these latter days we are so justly proud, is a blow at liberty of thought, and a circumscription of it, or a restraint put on it. If we have common sense, we cannot now speculate vaguely as to the distance of the sun from the earth, or the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter; for we *know* that distance with considerable, and that ratio with almost inconceivable, accuracy. These are just

two examples out of thousands which might be given.

Now one point more. Some things that we know, and cannot speculate about, we know by our own senses and personal investigations ; but a great many, like those which I have just mentioned, few know in this way. How, then, do we know them? By the concurrent testimony of competent witnesses or judges. This has created in us a certainty so absolute that, struggle as we may, we cannot, if we are sensible men, get away from it. Contrary ideas may, of course, occur, or we may bring them up voluntarily to our minds ; but we cannot succeed in giving any real assent to them, or seriously entertaining them as opinions. The liberty of thought which our forefathers had on these matters is lost to us.

But you say that the surrender of our reason to reason itself, so to speak, which we make in the instances I have named, and no doubt in many others, is a very different thing from giving it up at the command of the Church. I answer, by no means. This is just where, from lack of thought and knowledge on the subject, you make your mistake.

Our assent to the teachings of the Church is really an act similar to the assent which both you and we make to Stanley's discoveries in Central Africa. Your mistake about it arises

from your not understanding what faith is. You have been so long without it, so long accustomed in religious matters to give the name of faith to speculation or opinion, that you really have forgotten the meaning of the word.

Faith really is an assent to testimony; and it is a rational or common sense act when the testimony is credible and unimpeachable. It is very specially and peculiarly so when the testimony is that of Almighty God.

Now, our belief in the dogmas of the Church is an act just of this character. It is not a blind submission or obedience to a command, but an assent to a revelation or a statement of fact made to us by none less than God Himself. He informs us on subjects which are beyond the reach of our senses or any of our natural faculties; beyond the reach of *all* of us, just as many facts of nature or conclusions of mathematics, like those which I have mentioned, are beyond the reach of *most* men.

"Well," you may rejoin, "but how do you know that it is God who informs you about these matters?" I answer, simply by what we call the evidences of religion. Really very much in the same way as you would assure yourself that your informant on astronomical, mathematical, or geographical matters was in fact the authority on these subjects that he claimed to be. In the case of religion, setting

aside the direct action of God on the soul in a supernatural way, which raises our act to a supernatural plane, the proof is, in the first place, principally by the miracles or signs by which He accompanies His statement. Thus Nicodemus said to our Lord: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with Him." The miracles of our Lord Himself, of His apostles, and of their followers, continued in the Church, as has been said and is plain to all who will study the evidence, down to the present day, are sufficient in themselves to show us in whose name the Church speaks; for they are not only wonders, but wonders which bear, on examination, the stamp of God upon them.

We could now, however, almost dispense with these proofs of religion. The very impossibility in itself of a merely human institution teaching for nearly two thousand years the same doctrine; not merely repeating a form of words, but teaching a living system of belief regarding matters unascertainable by reason; answering questions regarding it, often quite complicated and abstruse, and yet never betrayed, in spite of the personal ignorance of history or theology among its teaching body which has largely existed at various periods and more or less at all times, into a single contradiction or inconsistency, is in itself a suffi-

cient proof that a superhuman wisdom is guiding and directing it.

Again, the survival of the mere organization of the Church, and the very fact of the obedience, assent, and harmony existing within it, though unaided by material force, in contrast to the insubordination, doubt, and discord which have come into Christian bodies separated from it, are in themselves a strong proof to many.

Well, now, say, if you please, that our evidence is not as good as we think; the fact remains that we believe because we are convinced, not on account of any external pressure. But now, perhaps, you resume: "This may be all very well for the learned and intelligent; but how are these considerations which you have named an argument for the common people who have not much reasoning ability?" I think you may possibly make this objection; but still if you do, I am a little surprised. For I understood that you were one of the persons who *had* reasoning ability, and that your objection was in the beginning that you did not want to abandon it. I thought it only applied to thinking men. If one has not got much use of reason, certainly it is not a tyranny that he should be taught by others who have. No one says that it is subjecting a child to a mental slavery when we teach him his alphabet; the child, no doubt, may complain that his liberty is re-

stricted by the process, but it is not his liberty of thought that worries him. He may say that he wants to play, but he does not say: "Never mind about teaching me; I can find out all this by myself"; or if perchance he does say it, he does not know what he is talking about.

In the same way, then, as we teach a child the alphabet we teach him religion; just as you teach him geography, because you know it is true. But we do not want to keep him down to an abject belief in us as his instructors. We want him, we want all Catholics, so far as in them lies—and all other people too, for the matter of that—to study these evidences of religion. That is precisely what our Christian schools are for; to make all our people believe in their religion intelligently, instead of taking it for granted. We want that any restrictions there are on their liberty of thought should be such as they themselves see are necessary for a reasonable being.

We do not, of course, want that their heads should be stuffed full of statements which we know are false, or that doubts which they have not the means of settling should be put into their minds as to what we know is true. But in this we act just as you do about secular knowledge. You do not want false or inaccurate text-books; you do not put two histories, one correct, the other full of errors, before

students, for them to take whichever they choose.

In short, there is nothing in our action in this whole matter different from yours, except what comes from the fact that in religion we are sure about the truth, while you are doubtful. If Bible Christians agreed about the sense of the Bible as we do about the Catholic faith; if their Word of God was really a practical and available Word of God to them, clearly settled and demonstrated, as ours is to us, they would consider liberty of thought about it a mistake, and a dangerous one, as it is, more or less according to the importance of the subject, about all things which are really known and definitely ascertained. On such matters there is no advantage in surmising or guessing; one is much better off to know the truth at once. And we Catholics know and admit this obvious piece of common sense; and the more intelligent a Catholic may be, the more clearly he sees it.

Therefore, do not fancy that Catholics are chafing and fretting secretly over their inability to indulge in religious speculations. There is, in fact, no occasion for them to do so, if they are fond of this sort of mental occupation; for there are a vast number of points on which they are quite free to form opinions; which are not settled by the Church, and which in all proba-

bility form no part of the faith, and therefore never will be so settled. The number of such points is probably practically greater for us than it is for you. The fixing of the fundamental principles, or indeed the determination of any of the laws of any science, always opens up a number of questions which otherwise would not be thought of; and what is true of sciences in general is true of theology in particular. If one is always worrying about first principles, which necessarily are comparatively few, one never gets any further, and has his mental range much restricted.

But you should not imagine, as is indeed plain from what has been said, that Catholics have to be always struggling to stifle their doubts about those matters which do belong to faith, and have been definitely settled. They do not have to do so, any more than you have to about the matter of some science with which you may be somewhat imperfectly acquainted. They know that they can study up the matter of religion in correct and profound treatises, if they like, just as matters of science can be studied. But they feel quite confident of their faith without doing so, just as you do, though you may not be a man of science, about the determined laws of astronomy or chemistry. And they feel no more need to study the works of Protestants or infidels to obtain information about religion

than you do to read the pamphlet of some would-be astronomer who thinks he has smashed gravitation to pieces, and refuted Newton or Laplace; non-Catho^lic speculations about religion are to an intelligent Catholic simply unscientific trash.

That is to say, they feel and act in this way unless they have some private reason for hoping that the faith might not be true. They know, of course, that it is a restraint, not on their intellect but on their passions; for any religion coming from God must necessarily be this. And this restraint, indeed, may cause some chafing and fretting. It is our unvarying experience that Catholics do not look out for arguments against their religion unless they wish to escape from its control *in this respect*; or, what comes to the same thing, unless they want to enjoy some temporal good which cannot be gained without renouncing their faith. Of course I can hardly expect you to believe that I am right in this; but it is true, all the same. It is not merely a conclusion of theory; it is a result of observation.

It may be noticed that the charges discussed in these two chapters are, strangely enough, directly opposed to each other. The charge that the Church is opposed to science is really that she is opposed to that which itself prevents liberty of thought by giving us certain informa-

tion. It may be said, however, that she desires liberty of thought on some matters, but forbids it on others. This is true, but not in the sense in which it is intended. She forbids, as against reason, common sense, and the welfare of man, liberty of thought on matters, whether in the material or spiritual order, which have been clearly demonstrated and definitely ascertained; she refuses to abandon it on those which are still open to reasonable question, as is the case with certain scientific hypotheses not as yet proved. You may disagree with her in your judgment of what is certain and what is doubtful; but except for this, there is no difference between her action and your own.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OPPOSED TO FREE INSTITUTIONS.

IT is a charge very commonly made against the Church, that she is opposed to free institutions. This charge, the truth of which is usually simply taken for granted, is one which naturally prejudices Americans more against her than any other which could be made. For Americans, as a rule, are most profoundly attached to the free institutions under which they live, and most absolutely convinced that democracy is better than monarchy or aristocracy in any form.

Now, I say the truth of this most injurious charge against the Church is usually simply taken for granted. But surely such a proceeding is far from being fair. I should like to have a reason given for it ; and shall try, therefore, to find out what reasons there are likely to be.

The most obvious one seems to be that the government of the Church is itself monarchical. This statement is true, in a certain sense, no doubt. The Pope is unquestionably the supreme authority in matters of

faith and morals ; that is, his consent is necessary and sufficient to establish the truth in controverted questions on these subjects. This authority is, however, rarely exercised ; and when it is, it is usually merely to place beyond controversy a point already very nearly settled by the popular voice. So that here, after all, we very rarely have any strain put on our minds by obedience to his infallible decision.

Then again, it is true that in matters of discipline the Pope is the supreme legislator. He has absolute control over all inferior legislators in the Church ; he can reform or abrogate laws made by bishops in their dioceses, if it seems to him expedient to do so ; and he can make laws for the universal Church which are binding without the consent of his inferiors. But here again, such action on his part is very rare. Outside of the matter of the rubrics—that is, of the prayers or ceremonies of public worship—legislation of this kind is unusual, as is also interference with the action of his subordinates. The fact is, that both their action and his are usually simply in accordance with fixed traditional principles, modified more or less according to the circumstances of particular times or places ; with which those living on the spot are generally supposed to be best acquainted.

In point of fact, then, Rome legislates very

little, for the very simple reason that there is very little need that she should do so. The work of the Church proceeds on its regular lines throughout the world mainly by means of the zeal and energy of the clergy, and of the laity co-operating with them; and it is seldom that this needs to be specially directed or controlled. The idea, so common among Protestants, that everything done by Catholics is done by virtue of secret orders from Rome, is simply ludicrous to those at all acquainted with the actual state of things. In reality, Rome seldom initiates; as a rule she merely sanctions or allows; sometimes she checks or restrains, or perhaps forbids. For example, take the case of the founding of a new religious order or community, by which we mean such as the Jesuits, Dominicans, or Franciscans, or numbers of others less notable or conspicuous. The first idea of an order like this is formed by some priest or even layman, having no special authority in the Church; he associates with himself some friends and sympathizers, and they form a little society, with the permission, probably, of the bishop of the diocese. After some years, especially if the society has grown and been established in various dioceses, the approval of Rome may be asked; but it takes some time to obtain it. Meanwhile the association or order goes on doing the work for which it was established, very

much as it would if there were no Pope at all to say anything about it. The definite Papal approval is, of course, a great thing for it; but its real success or failure depends principally on the zeal and virtue of its members; Rome simply waits to see if it has the elements of life and strength in it; it does not undertake to give these to it, or to establish by its decrees what would not otherwise exist.

What is true of great matters is also true of lesser ones. Any one familiar with the practical working of the Church knows that it is very far from being in practice a strong centralized government, the pressure of which is felt continually throughout its dominions; still farther from being a military organization, every part of which acts by orders from headquarters.

Of course I know it will be hard for many to believe this; and it is, of course, impossible to prove the truth of what I say about a matter of this kind to those who are not willing to believe it. It is, indeed, only by being a Catholic that one can fully understand and realize these things. I must content myself with simply stating facts.

If you ask why the government of the Church should be monarchical, the answer seems evident enough. It is plain, in the first place, with regard to matters of faith, that the amount of supernatural assistance required is

much less on this system than on any other which could be devised; and secondly, with regard to matters of discipline, as the general government is mainly occupied, not with making general laws, but with the decision of particular questions, a representative government would be intolerably cumbrous and inconvenient. It would be much the same as if for the business of the Supreme Court it were necessary to hold a convention of all the lawyers in the country. When any important changes are to be made in the general laws of the Church, it is customary to convoke a general council; but this seldom needs to be done.

So much, then, for the monarchical constitution of the Church itself. But another argument is often made to show that the Church sympathizes with monarchy in general, and is opposed to free institutions; namely, that the Church has been generally allied with monarchies in actual history.

This is again true as a statement of fact; but when we come to look at it, it really has no significance. For it simply comes from two causes, neither of which can justly be a ground of complaint against the Church. The first is that the Church has always been a supporter of legitimate government, and opposed to anarchy; the Church, from the days of our Lord Himself, who said, "Render unto Cæsar the things

which are Cæsar's," has always upheld and sanctioned the authority of the State. The second is that most governments have been monarchical; so that in supporting government, it has usually supported monarchy necessarily. But the Church has always recognized and supported popular governments where they existed. It has supported monarchy as a rule, simply because, as a rule, there was nothing else to support.

Where the reigning family has in any particular country been strongly Catholic, the Church has no doubt at some times preferred to trust to it than to venture the experiment of republicanism, particularly where the republic was founded, like the first one in France, on principles opposed to religion; and it is quite natural that individual Catholics should generally have taken the same view of the case. And, undoubtedly, the Church has sometimes suffered and brought itself into a subjection injurious to its own freedom by putting its trust too much in princes, allowing them, in return for their protection, too much interference in ecclesiastical affairs. But all this has been from no preference for monarchy in itself.

The Church undoubtedly prefers that a nation should be Catholic rather than Protestant or infidel; she also prefers that its government should be Catholic; that is, that it should

legislate in accordance with the principles of Catholic morality, which, rightly understood, commend themselves to the common sense of mankind. She also desires that the Catholic religion should be allowed its free exercise. But though she evidently cannot regard it as beneficial that error should also be allowed free course, experience has shown that invoking the arm of the State to repress it, except where it is evidently contrary to the peace and the temporal welfare of the State itself, is likely to do more harm than good, both by making religion itself odious, and also, as has been said, by putting religion itself in a subjection to the temporal authority in return for the protection and aid afforded by the latter.

She is, therefore, thoroughly in favor of a government like that under which we have the good fortune to live; a government which confines itself to its own proper business of providing for those things which concern the temporal welfare of its citizens. She does not regard it, of course, as being the best possible government in its actual legislation, any more than she regards its citizens, the authors of that legislation, as the best or wisest men possible; she cannot but see that it makes mistakes, and labors under false impressions, particularly with regard to herself, her own aims and intentions. She also knows that true belief in

matters of doctrine has a more intimate connection with right principles of public and private life than is generally supposed ; and that, for want of thorough Christian knowledge and instruction, the temporal welfare and happiness of the people is not so effectually secured as it might be. But she does not wish to secure for the American people the advantages of the truth which she possesses by force, trickery, or conspiracy ; but only by the legitimate means which American citizenship places in the hands of all. She regards these means and this citizenship as the best hope which any country can have for its future.

Catholics desire the conversion of this country to the Catholic faith ; that is a matter of course. So Methodists, Baptists, or Presbyterians must necessarily desire its conversion to their own respective ways of thinking. No charge should, therefore, be made against us on this head. But should we be successful in this, we do not desire to tyrannize over those who may still differ from us. We do not wish to change our form of government, or to establish the Catholic religion, making nonconformity with it an offence. But no one could rightly blame a Catholic majority for making laws by which, for instance, the proper respect for the Divine institution of marriage should be more fully secured. If infidels are not considered

disloyal to our free institutions for trying to break this down, how can Catholics be so considered for endeavoring to build it up? Or if a Catholic majority should believe that some special measures needed to be taken for suppressing the evils of intemperance, and should vote such measures, as Catholics would do now if they followed the direction of their pastors, could such a proceeding be considered as bigoted, intolerant, or contrary to the principles of American liberty?

I know that many, perhaps most non-Catholics, will say: "This all sounds well enough; but organizations, as well as individuals, must be judged, not by their professions, but by their actions. History shows that Catholics have always persecuted those opposed to them, and persecuted them simply as such, whenever it was in their power to do so. And what they have done we believe they will do again."

This charge is a very common and a very weighty one in the minds of most Protestants. It deserves a special examination.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PERSECUTION.

PERSECUTION is considered by the average Protestant as something specially characteristic of the Catholic Church. He considers it so obvious that the Catholic Church always persecutes heretics when she gets a chance, that it is hardly worth while to make any attempt to prove it. But if proof is called for, surely "Bloody Mary" and the Spanish Inquisition are quite sufficient to settle the question.

But in fact the question is one which cannot be settled in any such summary manner. Before we can arrive at any sound conclusions, or even think or talk reasonably on the subject, we must understand just what is meant by persecution, and how far or in what cases we can reasonably object to it.

No one, I presume, objects to the persecution of burglars or murderers except those who are, or are likely to be, the objects of such persecution. Society has well-formed and settled views, not only as to the immorality of burglary and murder, but also as to their inconsistency with the peace and welfare of the state. As a

rule, it contents itself with the persecution or punishment of the overt act, and it accomplishes its end sufficiently well by so doing ; for burglars or assassins are not inclined to make profession openly of their purposes, or to incite others publicly to imitate their example.

But even in this may we not have, in a certain sense, persecution for opinion's sake? Suppose that a man holds that, according to his religion or conscience, the sacrifice of human life is necessary. That such doctrines are held as religious creeds by considerable numbers of men, is well known. Would not a civilized government acquiring control of a country where such views were held be obliged to put them down by the strong hand—to persecute and severely punish those who should act out their convictions in this respect? And yet the victim of such persecution might truly allege that, according to his creed, the taking of life in the case in which he was punished for it was a matter of the highest obligation, most necessary not only for his own salvation but for that also of the one whose life he had taken.

It cannot be said that holding such doctrines is a mark of insanity, and that insane persons form an exception to ordinary rules ; for one cannot believe whole nations to be insane.

But we will take a more practical case ; one nearer home. Surely there are plenty of peo-

ple, not considered insane, who hold that a man, at least if no one is depending on him for support, has a right to take his own life. It is hard to prove that this conviction is unreasonable, or that this view is a mistaken one, unless by the aid of religion; and if the would-be suicide does not admit the teachings of your religion, it is practically impossible to persuade him of his error, which may amount to a religious conviction with him. Nevertheless, laws have been passed, and now exist, making attempted suicide a punishable offence; and we do not find that such laws are considered to savor of intolerance or persecution. And yet clearly by them we punish men for acting out their conscientious convictions, or what may be presumed to be such; as in the case of the Mormons.

But you say, "What we mean by persecution is persecution, not for action's but for opinion's sake. As you have said, the civilized state contents itself with punishing the overt act."

Had you not better wait a minute, and see if you are not going too far in this definition of persecution which you have given? For my part, I do not see very well how any one can be persecuted merely for an opinion, unless we bring a mind-reader as witness against him. What is meant by the loose phrase "persecution for opinion's sake," means really persecu-

tion for giving utterance to an opinion ; for that is the only thing which testimony is competent to prove. An opinion which remains locked up in a man's breast, unbetrayed by word or sign, never was persecuted, because it cannot be. It is only the manifestation of opinion which can be punished ; though this manifestation may be negative, as we may say, or simply recusancy ; an omission of certain acts or certain formulas which would be cheerfully performed or subscribed by those holding the opinions legally recognized as correct.

But, in point of fact, most of the religious persecution which has been instituted, at least by Catholic states, has been for the *open* utterance of heretical opinions, generally accompanied by the endeavor to persuade others also to embrace them. Those who have made no attempt to propagate their opinions have generally been unmolested.

Now, are we prepared to say that free utterance and propagation of opinions which the people in general, and the authorities which as a rule represent their views, consider as dangerous to the general welfare, should always be allowed? We have, I know, tried to maintain the right of free speech and a free press ; still we have always drawn the line at the publication of evidently indecent and immoral literature, and should undoubtedly draw it, had we

occasion, at the public giving out of matter of this kind by word of mouth. I am inclined to think, also, that it is only because infidelity has lately become quite common, that public blasphemy against all that Christians hold sacred is tolerated among us. Even now it is not in all parts of the country ; and when it is not, this is not stigmatized as persecution.

Furthermore, we are lately beginning to see that some stop must be put to the open publication of opinions which are essentially subversive of all social order and peace. A man may hold in his own mind the idea that "property is theft," that the private ownership of anything is an outrage on humanity ; that cannot be helped or punished. But if he undertakes to ventilate this doctrine on a public platform, especially if his doing so is equivalent to a positive incitement to his hearers to steal or destroy the goods of others, the state has as much right to interfere with his action as if he personally undertook such stealing or destruction. Or a man may entertain the opinion that all government is intolerable, that every one must be free to do exactly what he pleases ; that we cannot interfere with. But if he collects a body of hearers about him, and endeavors to form them into a mob for resistance to lawful authority, there is no reason why his freedom of speech should not be as much re-

strained as his freedom of action would be should he begin to act on his own part in defiance of the law of the land.

I think, then, it can hardly be denied that it is in the competency of the state to prevent and to punish the open expression of dangerous opinions. If that is conceded, we have the whole essential idea of persecution as one that cannot be condemned as unreasonable or cruel. Every state must for its own preservation sometimes persecute, not for the mere holding of an opinion, but for its open expression.

We are therefore obliged to confess that if we condemn persecution for the sake of religion—that is to say, the punishment of the open expression and propagation of religious opinions, it must be either because such opinions cannot be considered as dangerous to the welfare of society, or because the punishment will be ineffectual, only increasing the evil it is intended to remove, or because it is of an excessive or barbarous character, going farther than is necessary to accomplish the result which is required.

It is really for the first of these reasons mainly that persecution is now generally held to be unjustifiable. This, then, I shall principally examine, as follows:

An opinion cannot, of course, be considered dangerous to the social welfare if it

is considered by the community in general as being quite probably true, or if it is one which has no perceptible connection with the moral character or the material prosperity of man. On the first of these grounds ordinary political theories cannot be considered fit matters for legal repression; on the second, most of the speculations which might be put forward in abstract physical science, however absurd they may evidently be, must, of course, be indulgently tolerated.

It is on both these grounds that the persecution of religious opinions is now generally reprobated. The double notion is now generally abroad, first, that truth in matters of religion, even perhaps with regard to the very existence of God Himself, is unattainable, so that any view which a man holds about them is merely a speculation; and, secondly, that religious opinions, properly so called, have no connection with morality or the well-ordered life of the social body.

On these premises, of course, it is therefore perfectly reasonable that persecution should be reprobated. But the difficulty is that the premises themselves cannot be considered as well taken. The first begs the question as to the existence of certain evidence for religious truth. The second is utterly absurd, as has been previously shown. A single instance

will show its absurdity. A man may believe in a God who sanctions and commands what the common sense of mankind regards as a crime. His belief is a religious opinion; but it is one like in every respect to those before instanced, of absolute communism and anarchy, to which the state cannot be indifferent.

Now, let us see what the application of this is to the persecutions which Catholic states have instituted. The circumstances, as a rule, have been that a body of men, or individuals here and there, have openly proclaimed and endeavored to propagate opinions which, rightly or wrongly, were held, not only by the government of the state, but also by the great mass of the people, as being the denial of truths most necessary to the holy life of the individual, and by means of that to the stability, peace, and prosperity of the state. Catholics know, for example, perfectly well that if the people of a Catholic nation were persuaded of the truth of the Protestant doctrine as originally enunciated, to the effect that no sins would be imputed to one who had faith in Christ, the door would be at once opened to vice and disorder of every kind, as Luther and others of the original Reformers sorrowfully confess it was. "The world," says Luther in his *Table Talk*, "grows worse and worse, and becomes more wicked every day. Men are now

more given to revenge, more avaricious, more devoid of mercy, less modest, and more incorrigible; in fine, more wicked than in the Papacy." And in another place: "One thing no less astonishing than scandalous is, to see that since the pure doctrine of the gospel has been brought to light, the world daily goes from bad to worse." Bucer confesses that "the greater part of the people seem to have embraced the gospel only to shake off the yoke of discipline, and the obligation of fasting, penances, etc., which lay upon them in the time of popery, and to live at their pleasure, enjoying their lust and lawless appetite without control." Calvin says: "The pastors, yes, the pastors themselves who mount the pulpit . . . are at the present time the most shameful examples of waywardness and other vices."

I do not mean to say that these disorders everywhere visibly mark out Protestant nations from Catholic ones; they do not, and for two reasons. First, Catholics, as a rule, hardly live up to their faith, or, as we say, do not fully practise their religion; secondly, common sense, natural virtue, and the grace of God as well, have done much to correct the original Protestant doctrine, and to repair the wreck which it made. But the principle holds good that a religious doctrine may necessarily and obvi-

ously lead to results not only immoral, but such as shake the whole framework of society.

In some cases its effect may be immediate, being directly aimed at the social order itself. Such, for instance, is one of the propositions of Wickliffe to the effect that no man can have legitimate authority, either in the State or the Church, while he is in the state of mortal sin. This, of course, practically exempts every one from obedience to any superior, secular or religious, whose character he does not approve, and destroys the whole constitution of society at one blow. And yet it is a religious proposition; for it evidently means to recognize authority as coming from God, and to deny it to those who are not in His favor.

Now, can any one say that a Catholic state, or any state whatever for the matter of that, can calmly tolerate the dissemination of propositions of this kind? If it cannot, the persecutions of history are not without some just warrant.

To all this it must be added that it was not always simply the expression or propagation of opinion which has provoked persecution from Catholic states. Lawless acts of outrage and insult to what was most revered by the mass of the people were sometimes committed. Even now and in this country we have laws prohibiting and punishing the disturbance of religious

worship; why, then, should our ancestors not punish those who were guilty of this and much more?

We picture to ourselves those cruel Papists seizing and burning at the stake a man who was simply worshipping God in peace and privacy according to the dictates of his conscience; but really this was not the usual case.

I do not say it has never occurred; nor, what comes to about the same thing, that actual conformity has not been required to a religion in which one did not believe. But if these things have been notably exemplified anywhere, they were in the Protestant persecutions under Elizabeth and her successors, where Catholics were subjected to heavy penalties and placed under legal disabilities for refusing to attend a worship in which they could not conscientiously join; and priests were hung, drawn, and quartered for saying Mass even in private houses with the utmost seclusion, or indeed even for being priests. It was pretended that this was on account of treason; that the fact of a priest entering England from foreign parts was a sufficient proof of treasonable design; but the hollowness of the pretence was often shown by the offer of pardon on the condition of apostasy.

I do not deny, however, that there was in the Protestant English persecutions, long-con-

tinued and bloody as they were, a genuine though unfounded scare about danger to the state from Catholics. The fact really is that in almost, if not quite all the persecutions of history, including those of the early Christians under pagan Rome, this has been the strong and principal motive. The Romans were willing enough to tolerate any religion unless they thought it threatened the peace of the state and the authority of the emperors; and this has been the cause of persecution at other times as well, rather than simple religious rancor. It is Catholic or Protestant states, as a rule, that have persecuted, rather than Catholic or Protestant churches. The Spanish Inquisition, the great bugbear of Protestants and one of their great arguments against Catholicity, was specially a work of the state, against the severity of which Rome constantly protested.

That there may be, however, a fear, more or less reasonable, justifying a state in what may be properly called persecution on religious grounds, seems to be quite undeniable; and, of course, a nation holding a false faith is justified in conscience in persecuting as much as one holding a true faith, if it believes its faith to be true.

Let us now briefly notice the second and third of the reasons against persecution first given. As to the second, no doubt opinion has changed

much in recent times as to whether it is expedient in many cases in which it is obviously justifiable. This is just the puzzle at the present day with regard to anarchistic doctrines. Persecution to some extent seems absolutely necessary ; but the question is, Will it not rather fan the flame than extinguish it?

As to the third, we probably all admit that indignation is justly excited against the persecutions of former times on account of what certainly seems to us their needlessly cruel and barbarous character. But we must remember that they did not seem so to the people of those times. What would be in our judgment most cruel and atrocious punishments were constantly used then for all grave crimes ; and false belief was then considered by both Catholics and Protestants to be the greatest and most dangerous of all crimes. But the degree or severity of the punishment does not really enter at all into the principle of the thing. If persecution for religion's sake is really wrong in principle, it is as certainly wrong to fine a man a dollar for non-conformity to the state religion as to burn him at the stake.

Now, to look at the thing in a practical light, as the matter is to-day in this country and in the world in general. Judging from any indications which we have at the present time,

there can be little question that Catholics are far more tolerant toward Protestants than Protestants are toward them. That is notably the case right here among us ; you will seldom see any signs in this country of hatred on the part of Catholics for Protestants ; that of Protestants for Catholics is manifested continually. We do not altogether set this down to malice, however. It is plain that it is for the most part caused by the dense ignorance, wilful, it is true, to some extent, but still ignorance all the same, which still prevails among Protestants regarding the Catholic faith. And on the basis of this ignorance, the hatred becomes more or less excusable. If our beliefs and practices were really what most Protestants still insist on believing them to be, in spite of the most earnest and often repeated denials on our part ; if even a tenth part of the old calumnies which they are continually handing down from generation to generation against us were true, there would really be ground for believing us to be dangerous enemies to society and to the moral, intellectual, and material progress of humanity.

We have no desire, and cannot very well have any, to persecute our countrymen ; for this reason, even were there no others, that they are not, as a rule, wilful apostates from the known truth, but rather sufferers from a darkness and mental confusion coming down to them from

their ancestors; and I heartily agree with the wish of Cardinal Gibbons "that religious intolerance may never take root in our favored land; may the only king to force our conscience be the King of Kings; may the only prison erected among us for the sin of unbelief or misbelief be the prison of a troubled conscience, and may our only motive for embracing truth be not the fear of man but the love of truth and of God."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CATHOLIC LAWS OF MARRIAGE.

I HAVE spoken in the last chapter but one of the belief of the Catholic Church on the subject of marriage, and of the legislation she would desire in this matter. It will be well to explain this more fully; for many misapprehensions exist regarding it.

Those who are not Christians may naturally consider themselves free to speculate, and to legislate as far as possible on this matter, without admitting any end to be secured by it except merely natural well-being, or any guide or light regarding it except that which is furnished by human reason. But Christians, at least those who believe, as the vast majority of Christians do, in the teaching of the Bible, who recognize the words of Christ and His postles

as there recorded as being really the Word of God, cannot stand on this ground. They must and do believe marriage to be a Divine institution, which man is not at liberty to tamper with according to his own will or fancy. And as the legislation of nations having a considerable Christian population may at the present day easily fall into the hands of unbelievers, there is evidently a probability here of such legislation being contrary to the Christian conscience, and therefore such that it cannot be recognized or obeyed by Christians. No Christian, indeed no sincere believer in any religion, nay, more, no genuinely conscientious man, can always recognize human legislation as supreme or beyond appeal.

And there is no matter on which a conflict between any Church and the State is more likely now to occur than on this. The State of to-day recognizes marriage simply as a contract, subject to secular legislation as completely as any other contract ; Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, on the other hand, regard it as a Divine institution subject to laws with which the State cannot interfere.

In principle or theory there is no difference between the attitude which a Catholic or that which any other religious or conscientious man may have to assume in some cases toward the law of the State on this subject. And in no

case does such attitude warrant a charge of opposition or enmity to free institutions, or to the nation to which we belong ; certainly it does so no more than did the conscientious objection which many Northerners had before the war to the returning of fugitive slaves, which was required by national legislation. Such oppositions of conscience to law must occur occasionally, unless we abandon conscience itself and substitute for it a principle of blind obedience to a sovereign or to a majority ; but conscience is really the strongest sanction to law that can exist ; so that nothing, even on the mere ground of expediency, would be gained, but much would be lost by the change. The most conscientious man is radically the best and most loyal citizen ; and he is also effectively so—that is, he supports actually existing laws, on the whole, better than any other man, since the occasions on which he cannot support them are few and far between.

Indeed, even on this matter, in which there is such a great divergence of theoretical view, the actual practical difficulty arising from the opposition of Church and State laws is comparatively small. To see this, let us consider the actual laws of the Church regarding marriage ; it will also be worth while for its own sake.

In the first place, these laws, properly so-called, do not affect the unbaptized. The

Church makes laws for none but those who are, by right at least, her members. She does indeed recognize Divine laws applicable to all men in the matter of marriage, as in other matters; she regards, for instance, a decree of divorce as not only illicit, but as null and void; and she believes that no man can validly marry his sister, or have more than one wife at the same time. The principal practical application of her belief on these matters is, that a Catholic cannot conscientiously marry a divorced man or woman. But if the Catholic in question believes the teaching of the Church on this point, he does not complain; and surely no one else has a right to. Neither could there be much complaint if Catholics should be able to bring about a great modification or even a complete destruction of the civil laws regarding divorce; Christians generally would approve, and unbelievers would have no more right to object to this than to any other action endorsed by the majority.

It is not, then, on these matters that trouble would be likely to arise. It is rather on the special laws which the Church does make for those belonging to her fold, which laws, of course, a non-Catholic state will not, as a rule, recognize.

These laws are principally to the effect of prohibiting or invalidating marriage under cer-

tain conditions ; and they are quite numerous. With regard to relationship, for instance, marriage is not admitted as valid between Catholics even so remotely related as third cousins ; nor is the marriage of a Catholic with an unbaptized person recognized. It is not considered as possible to marry after receiving holy orders ; of this I have already spoken. Nor can one having the solemn vows of a religious order validly marry. Perhaps the most practically important of all these provisions, as far as the State is concerned, is one not existing generally in this country, but prevailing over a great part of Europe, invalidating the marriage of Catholics unless celebrated in the presence of the parish priest and two witnesses. There are other laws than these making marriage invalid ; others which simply prohibit without invalidating ; but those which I have mentioned will suffice. The legislation of the Church on this point of impediments to marriage, as they are called, is quite complicated ; it is as impossible to explain it in a few words as it would be to put all the civil laws regarding contracts in a nutshell. That Catholics intending to marry should make no mistake nullifying their marriage in the sight of the Church, it is as necessary for them to consult a priest as it would be to consult a lawyer before drawing up a complicated legal document ; and

I may say that it is mainly on this account that the law above mentioned has been made, making it absolutely necessary for them to get married in the presence of the priest, in order that he may know their case and be able to advise and warn them properly. And though this provision is not, as has been said, generally in force in this country, this cogent reason for it exists here as elsewhere.

The Church, then, will often refuse to recognize as really married those whom the state regards as being so. As she will not accept as valid the remarriage to other parties of those who have obtained a civil divorce, so also she will not, where her law requiring the presence of the priest is in force, consider a merely civil marriage as being a marriage at all; nor will she consider those as truly married between whom an invalidating impediment exists according to her law, though the parties themselves, as well as the State, are quite ignorant of its existence. Also, *vice versa*, she must necessarily sometimes consider those as really married whom the State will not accept as such; for instance, in countries where it is necessary by civil law that all must be married by the civil magistrate, the Church will regard as married all Catholics who have complied with her own rules, whether they have with those of the State or not.

It must be remembered, however, that it is only concerning the baptized, who alone come under the jurisdiction of the Church, that she makes or can make special laws or regulations.

And it must also be well understood that the laws which are made by the Church admit of dispensation in particular cases. Of this matter of dispensation I have already spoken ; still it will be well to bring it up again, on account of its importance in the present connection. Let it not, then, be supposed that the Church meddles with, attempts to change, or makes exception to the laws of God in this or any other matter ; that she undertakes by any act of her own to make right what is wrong according to the Divine Law. In other words, she does not, as has been clearly stated before, give permission to commit sin, on any terms whatever. But it is an entirely different thing to make a rule which it is advisable should be observed on the whole, and to make exceptions to this rule in particular cases. This is no more giving permission to commit sin than it would be for the father of a family to require all to be in the house by ten o'clock at night, and then to allow some one to stay out later for special reasons.

There are, then, in these rules of the Church regarding marriage, some of greater importance, some of less. It has been said that third

cousins cannot validly marry, for instance ; this, of course, is not held to be part of the divine law ; no, it is a rule made by the Church for her own subjects. It might be changed to-morrow, and the limit placed at second cousins, instead of third ; but it is considered best, on the whole, to keep it for the present as it is, in order to discourage the marriage of those who are blood relations. But in any particular case, where any reason can be presented, the importance of such a remote relationship is so slight that the law will readily be relaxed.

On the other hand, the celibacy of the clergy is regarded as such an important matter that the law prohibiting those in holy orders to marry, and invalidating any marriage which they may attempt, is not dispensed for any private reasons, however grave or urgent they may seem. Indeed, it is obvious that were it otherwise the law would be in grave danger of being broken down.

Still, it would be a very different matter to give permission for this, from what it would be to allow a man to have two wives at once ; for in this latter case we have a clear and certain Divine Law standing in the way. And the Church will never consent to allow the Divine Law to be broken. She was willing to lose England rather than sanction such an act ; Catherine of Aragon being truly and indis-

solubly married to Henry VIII., it was simply and utterly impossible to give consent to his marriage with another while she was still alive ; just as impossible as it would have been to allow him to murder her in order to remove the difficulty. If the Pope had been willing to act as Luther acted in his similar case, the Reformation would probably have been effectually checked in England by the royal power ; but the Pope, acting in accordance with Catholic principles, could not give permission for sin, or do evil that good might come, even though that good were the saving of a whole nation to the faith.

Some cases, then, there may arise of serious and irremediable consequences coming from the inflexibility of the Church regarding the divine law ; but though trouble may no doubt arise from the difference of her legislation from that of the State, this trouble would practically be entirely avoided if Catholics would take care always to consult the Church in this important matter. The trouble comes from their breaking the laws of the Church through ignorance or contempt ; not from their breaking the laws of the State, or still less from any encouragement given them by the Church to do so. The State permits marriages which the Church will not recognize ; but it does not require anything which the Church will not permit, nor is it at all likely that it will forbid anything which the

Church requires. Where, for instance, a law requiring civil marriage is in force, the Church allows the form to be gone through with, merely instructing her members to regard this form as a mere contract of betrothal, to be ratified by the subsequent marriage in the Church; the State makes no objection to this subsequent marriage, regarding it simply as a religious ceremony, no more to be prohibited than the reception of Holy Communion on the occasion would be.

If Catholics, then, would be obedient to the Church, the State would have no complications to fear; and it has no reasonable grounds of complaint against the Church, which is always ready to reinforce any prudent provisions which the civil law may make on this or any other subject. If the State, for instance, does not recognize marriages as valid between minors, the Church will, for obvious reasons of prudence, see, so far as possible, that Catholics do not contract such marriages; or if a civil license is required, the Church will see that it is obtained. The very watchfulness of the Church in this matter, which requires a careful inquiry into the circumstances of a marriage before allowing it to be contracted, though mainly intended to secure the observance of her own laws, is of great assistance to the carrying out of those of the State as well.

As a special instance of this may be mentioned the law of the Church requiring the publication of the banns, as they are called, before marriage. This proceeding, as of course it is no part of the Divine Law, may be, and often is dispensed, if reason seems to exist for doing so; but it is insisted on more and more at present, and undoubtedly will be unless some more effectual way of accomplishing the same result shall be substituted for it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

USE OF THE LATIN LANGUAGE.

MANY object to us that the services of the Church are conducted, as a rule, in a language not understood by the people. As they have a deeply rooted idea that it is an essential part of our plan to keep the people in ignorance, this seems to them to give their idea strong confirmation. Some—and even well educated persons—imagine, astonishing as it appears to us, that we preach in Latin! We feel flattered, of course, by such a compliment to our classical scholarship, though we feel it to be quite undeserved, for it is safe to say that the number of priests, in this country at least, capable of such an achievement, would be quite

inadequate to furnish the multitude of sermons given in our churches.

But the notion is an admirable instance of the force of the long-established prejudice under which our Protestant brethren labor. One would think they would ask themselves, why we *should* preach in Latin; what would *be* our deep-laid scheme in doing so? It is hard to conceive of any, except to impress the people with our learning; and surely this could be more easily accomplished in some other way.

It ought to be hardly necessary, then, to say that we do *not* preach in Latin, unless on occasions, as for instance at great councils of the Church, when that language will on the whole be better understood than any other. It is for this reason, that of better understanding by the mass of those addressed, that our theological books for the use of the clergy are written, as a rule, in Latin; because they are written not for the clergy of one nation, but for all nations; and all the clergy are supposed to have enough learning to understand a book in Latin, though not perhaps to preach in that language; whereas it would be unreasonable to expect every one to understand English or German, to say nothing of the objection other nations might have to see one so preferred. Indeed, the same plan was followed till quite lately in scientific

books, intended to be read by scientific men throughout the world.

But, to return to the original question, Why is Latin used in the Church services? Does not this prevent the people from following the service intelligently, and indeed from knowing what is going on?

Not at all. For those who are able to read can easily find just the precise meaning of the words the priest is saying, by means of the translations put in the common prayer-books; and those who cannot read can have these translations read to them. What a pity it is that you cannot get rid of this curious notion that we have secrets which we want to keep back from the people! You have only to get a prayer-book at the nearest Catholic book-store, or borrow one, and you will find the services of the Church given as far as possible; though of course there are smaller books, which many prefer, in which there are other devotions instead.

I say that in the prayer-books the services of the Church are given as far as possible; but it is really not possible, owing to the shiftings which have to be made to adjust the fixed and the movable calendar, to give all the details of those prayers which are changed from day to day. Still, missals for the laity are published, which enable this to be done to a considerable extent, and those who wish can use them. It

is found, however, that most people prefer to use other prayers appropriate to the time, and not to be obliged to follow exactly on the lines and rules which the priest has to observe. But there are plenty of occasions on which the service, being of a somewhat simpler character, can be, and is intended to be, followed word by word; so that those who specially enjoy this form of worship have an ample opportunity to gratify their taste.

One special reason why it is unadvisable that the prayers of the more important part of the Mass should be said aloud like those used on the occasions of which I have just spoken, and the prayers in Protestant churches generally, and especially why it would not be well to say them in the vernacular or common language of the people is, that the Mass, as it must be remembered, is our Communion service. Now, in Protestant churches only a certain select number of the whole congregation are present at *this* service; and all of them are presumed to be in specially reverent and attentive dispositions, prepared to understand the service, and to join in it piously. But it is quite otherwise with the Catholic Mass. All Catholics are not only requested, but required to be present at it on Sundays and holydays of obligation; and non-Catholics may also well be there, many of whom may know nothing, or next to nothing,

about our religion or about the Christian religion in any form. It would, therefore, evidently be imprudent to recite aloud in the vernacular tongue the solemn and sacred words used by the priest on this occasion, and especially those relating to the consecration of the bread and wine; and indeed no reason can possibly be given why they should be so recited, as all those who are rightly interested in them can find them in their prayer-books; for the words of this more important part, the "canon of the Mass," as they are called, are precisely the same every day.

It seems, then, plain enough, for this reason as well as for the one previously given or implied, that of not forcing every one into precisely the same form of worship, that the services of the Church cannot well be all given in a loud voice and in the vernacular. It is evidently better to recite a considerable part of them quietly; for these, all that is necessary is that people should not be in ignorance of what is said; and of this, as has been seen, there is no danger. And, as long as a translation is provided, the language in which they are said is immaterial.

Still, it may be urged that those parts which are said aloud, or sung at High Mass, ought to be in the common language of the people. And it cannot be denied that these would be

edifying and interesting to many of those present if these parts were given in a language which they understood ; particularly those which are not the same every day, but have reference to the special feast which is being celebrated ; but, on the other hand, others might object to being distracted from their own devotions.

An advantage is gained, however, by having even these in Latin, which has not yet been mentioned. It is this : that, in the present arrangement, the service is the same in one country and another, so that Catholic travellers or emigrants find themselves at once at home in any Catholic Church wherever they may go ; and they feel at one with all other Catholics in every place. Whereas, if it were otherwise, a Catholic German would feel like a stranger in his own church in France ; and the wall of separation which difference of language builds up between people of various nations coming to settle in a country like our own would be strengthened, instead of broken down as it should be. As this country wishes to have all foreigners coming here to live to be at home in it, and to become Americans, so the Church wishes all her members in matters of religion to be Catholics, not Frenchmen, Germans, or Italians. Let them be Germans or Frenchmen at home, and Americans when they come here

in all political and national matters; but in those which concern religion let there be unity, so far as it can be maintained. And the one language of religion helps to secure this, especially as it is a language not belonging to any now existing nation. No other language besides the Latin could have these advantages, at least in Europe and here; for the languages of Europe are to a great extent founded on it; it is a sort of common ground, on which they all meet.

It must not, however, be imagined that Latin is considered essential by the Catholic Church. Other languages are used in the church service by various peoples which are in union with us. The principal reason why, in point of fact, the Catholic nations of Europe have their Mass and other principal acts of worship in Latin, is that they were converted to the faith by missionaries sent by the Roman Church at the time of the Roman Empire, when Latin was the language generally used in the western part of that empire, where the converted nations mostly lay. But if the Greek or the Russian Church were united with us, as we hope they may be at some time not far distant, they would in all probability desire and be willingly allowed, and perhaps even required, to keep their ancient liturgies unchanged.

I hope enough has been said to persuade you

that we do not pray in Latin in order to mystify our people ; for that, after all, is the real point of importance. Depend on it, my dear friends, you are the only ones who are mystified ; and you only are so because you will not come close up to us, and examine to see just what we are like ; you stand off and see us dimly and confusedly through the dust and mist that three centuries of prejudice and misunderstanding have raised to blind your eyes.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CEREMONIES AND RITES OF THE CHURCH.

ONE objection to the Catholic Church, which has great practical weight in the minds of many and perhaps of most people who have been brought up in Protestantism, is that she has too many rites and ceremonies. Our worship seems to them to consist principally in dressing up in different kinds of vestments, moving to and fro, bowing and genuflecting, ringing bells and burning incense ; the whole being accompanied with various sorts of musical performances. They fail to see in this any kind of prayer or praise ; it seems to them to be a spectacle intended to amuse or interest the audience, rather than the offering of an homage to the Divine Majesty.

These ideas are perhaps more common in America than in any other part of the Christian world ; and come, no doubt, to a great extent from the Puritan ancestry from which so many of us are descended. And yet it seems strange that a people like these ancestors of ours, whose religion was based so largely on the Old Testament, should have failed to recognize in its pages the Divine approval of ceremonial in worship, not merely intimated in a general way but carried out in the Mosaic law with great detail. The rites of the Catholic Church are surely not more magnificent than those of Solomon's temple.

"Well," it may be said, "that is true. But we know that the Old Law was abrogated at the coming of Christ. He told us that God is a Spirit ; and that they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." Certainly, we all admit that. But did not Solomon himself, when he built the temple, and until his heart was turned to strange gods, worship the one God in spirit and in truth ? Why cannot God be worshipped outwardly as well as inwardly ? What did our Lord Himself say, when He condemned the Pharisees for tithing mint and rue and every herb, and passing over judgment and the love of God ? He said (Luke xi. 42) : "Now these things you ought to have done, and not to leave those undone."

But it may still be asked : “ Do not you Catholics make too much of these outward rites and forms, just as the Jews did of old ; do you not consider them of more importance than the ten commandments, or at least act as if you so considered them ? ” To this I would answer, that a Catholic must be indeed poorly acquainted with his religion who could entertain such an idea for a moment. Such an one there may be ; such, however, I do not remember ever to have met. And as to the mind of the Church, and the teaching of her doctors and theologians, there can be no doubt whatever. It is allowed on all hands that the rubrics, as we call the rules of the Church concerning rites and ceremonies, are in many cases not binding under sin at all ; or, in other words, that many of them really do not have the force of law ; that they are, as we say, “ directive,” not “ preceptive.” In others, however, they are undoubtedly of obligation, especially where they concern the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But even here they are acknowledged to be of less weight than the obligations of the natural or of the Divine Law. Even the strict fulfilment of the conditions laid down by Christ for the Sacraments themselves may sometimes be jeopardized for the sake of man, for whom the Sacraments were established. In case, for example, of danger in delay, we not only dispense

with the solemnities which the Church has appointed to accompany baptism, but we even baptize with water which is certainly unfit and perhaps even inadequate to the purpose, repeating the ceremony afterward if there be time. Catholics realize fully the words of Christ (Mark ii. 27): "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

The idea that we are such sticklers for ceremonies is absurd to one who really knows us; the danger of our neglecting them is greater than of our increasing them. Equally or more so is the idea that we rely on them mainly for the conversion of the heathen. Missionaries, when they go to pagan countries, cannot usually take with them what is required for the solemn observance of ecclesiastical functions; and if they could they could seldom use them, on account of the danger of exciting persecution by public displays of that or any sort. The teaching of the faith by them in heathen lands is more like what you might find here in the poorest kind of Sunday-school.

But it may still be objected: "What, after all, is the use of these rites and ceremonies anyway, especially in this enlightened age?" To this the plain answer is the same as that given before, when we were talking about images and pictures. Ceremonies are, like these, a means of fixing the attention on things them-

selves invisible, which are represented by them. Our thoughts are apt to stray if they have nothing to fix them but bare walls. Man, though a spirit, is not merely a spirit; he has a body and bodily senses, to which religion must appeal, and bring them to the lines on which he wishes his soul to proceed. The world, the flesh, and the devil appeal to the soul by means of the senses; why should we not turn their own weapons against them, by ceremonial, as well as by music, which Protestants themselves generally use as a lawful means to this end?

But it is not only for man's sake that we should employ these means; no, it is for God's sake as well. It is right that we should honor Him by offering Him all that is in itself good and beautiful which we have to give. The ceremonial of the Church mainly centres round His Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament which reposes on our altars; it is to Him there concealed that it is rendered, like the precious ointment poured on His feet by Mary Magdalen.

He was rebuked for allowing this, you know, but it was the faithless Judas who rebuked Him, and claimed that the ointment should have been sold and the price given to the poor. Is it not, then, following in his steps, to rebuke us for wasting money on our Lord? At any rate, do not do so until you are ready to take from the furnishing and beautifying of your

houses what we spend on the house of God, or until you can show that you, to say nothing of your superior means, devote even absolutely as much as we do to the help of the poor whom He loves.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE GOOD AND THE BAD IN THE CHURCH.

I COME now, finally, to an objection, the most forcible one, perhaps, that can be made against us; for it is one which really has a strong foundation in fact. It is urged against us, that if our organization be really, as it claims to be, the true Church of God, it ought to bear more plainly in the conduct of its members the marks of its Divine origin. Those who are separated from us say: "If Catholics, as a rule, led lives of notable piety and holiness; if they were plainly distinguished from others by their superior virtue; if they were evidently more just, truthful, pure, sober, and temperate than those around them; if it could be seen from their conduct that their hearts were set on things above, not on those of this world; then indeed we would be more inclined to acknowledge that they were the true followers of Him who gave to us the great example of what man ought to be. 'By their fruits,' He said, 'ye

shall know them ' ; but we do not see the fruits in the lives of most of the Catholics with whom we meet."

As I have said, I do not deny the force of this objection. That Catholics are not what they ought to be is indeed a cause of reproach ; it is truly a scandal, a rock of offence, a stumbling-block to unbelievers for which they are to blame.

But it should in justice be noted that it is one which our Lord Himself, in founding His Church, foresaw and foretold. "It is impossible," He said (Luke xvii. 1), "that scandals should not come: but woe to him through whom they come." The same prediction is recorded by St. Matthew (xviii. 7). And He distinctly announced that His Church should not be composed entirely of the good, but largely of the bad. He compared the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xiii. 24-30) to a man who sowed good seed in his field, with which good seed was mixed cockle or tares, sown by his enemy ; at the time of the harvest the wheat from the good seed was gathered into the barn, while the cockle was burned. And again, even more plainly (same chapter, 47-48), He said that the kingdom of heaven was like a net cast into the sea, gathering together all kind of fishes, of which the good were kept, the bad thrown away. And yet again (Matt. xxv. 1-12), it is

compared to ten virgins, five of whom were wise, five foolish.

Now, in these passages it is plain that by the kingdom of heaven is meant the Church on earth. For He says that at the end of the world (Matt. xiii. 41) : " The Son of man shall send his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity." But, as St. Gregory remarks, in His kingdom above no scandals or workers of iniquity are to be found, to be gathered out.

Protestants have generally labored to construct a church on earth unlike this which our Lord described ; that is to say, a church consisting entirely of good people. Church-members, with them, usually have to make a special profession of religion ; they are supposed to get religion by a particular favor conferred on them from on high. In some denominations, it is supposed also that if one once really gets religion he cannot lose it ; he is justified and sanctified from that time on, and his life is expected to correspond with the particular favor which he has received. If he backslides altogether, this can be accounted for by his never really having got religion at all ; though in Luther's mind, as has before been observed, a careless and sinful life would have been no argument against such an one, if he still kept up a lively faith that he had been saved by

Christ. But this would hardly do now, and indeed it could hardly have ever worked in practice ; practically, with most of our Protestants, a man or woman who is a church-member must lead a good life, such as is worthy, at least in appearance, of the profession which is made.

But with us all this is different. Every one who is baptized is with us a member of the Church, just as much as the Pope himself. There is no distinction with us between communicants and non-communicants, except what comes from the consideration that very young children cannot be expected to communicate intelligently, so that it is advisable that they should not receive until the age, say, of ten or eleven. But there is no hard-and-fast line drawn even here ; some children who are specially intelligent or pious make their first Communion at an earlier age. And the practice has prevailed at some times and places of giving Communion even to infants. I need hardly say that this does not exist here with us.

It is true that Catholics are sometimes "excommunicated," as we say, until such time as they repent for specially grievous or scandalous sins, committed in defiance of the excommunication which may be attached to such sins. But this is rare ; one is not excommunicated simply by leading a careless or even a sinful life.

The result of our discipline is, of course, that we have, in accordance with our Lord's prediction, a large number of negligent or even notably vicious people, whose lives are a scandal to the Church, and reprobated by it in the plainest way, but who still hold on to their faith and must be considered as Catholics. We may sometimes wonder that they do not abandon the Church whose instructions they confessedly do not follow; but if they do not the Church does not expel them, except in the extreme or special cases above mentioned, but still counts them as her children, and patiently hopes and waits for their repentance and return, at least at the hour of death. The tares are allowed to grow up with the wheat, to be separated finally only by God and His angels at the judgment, not before, according to our Lord's words already quoted. We should make great mistakes if we should try to separate them here; we should, as He has warned us, root up the wheat with the tares; for often those who have sinned turn to God, and persevere to the end; while those who for a long time have served Him sometimes fall away.

No comparison can, then, justly be made between Catholic and Protestant church-members or even church-goers; for all Catholics, practically, are church-members until they formally renounce their faith, while only a select num-

ber of Protestants are so ; and Catholics, as a rule, however bad their lives, go to Mass occasionally at least, and very probably regularly, while Protestants are very apt to stay at home.

But it may be still urged that the conduct of Protestants at large, irrespective of church-membership, is better than that of Catholics. I would say to this, that were it true it would perhaps prove too much for those to whom these pages are principally addressed ; that is, for sincere and practical non-Catholic Christians, who believe in the Christian religion and live according to their idea of it. For a very large proportion, if not indeed an actual majority of Protestants, at least in this country, are simply that and nothing more ; that is to say, they protest, as their fathers did, against the Catholic Church, but their religion stops at that. There is nothing positive about it ; in other words, they simply have no faith, Christian or otherwise. Take care, then, that you do not undermine the ground on which you yourselves stand, by adducing arguments which may only go to prove that Christianity is worse than no religion at all.

In point of fact, however, the arguments which you draw from your own observation of things immediately around you, or in this country, generally have little bearing on the question. The ordinary criminality which at-

tracts your attention is rather due to lack of education and of worldly means than to any other cause. Education, the cultivation of the intellect, has a double effect in this regard. It withdraws a man somewhat from the lower and more animal temptations, by giving him something else to think about; at the same time it enables him to conceal his sins more skilfully, and to plan them more artfully. And wealth secures him from the ordinary smaller and open sins against property, at the same time enabling him better to protect himself from the consequences of dishonesty. It may well be questioned whether education and wealth make men really better; but they certainly make them apparently so, as a rule. The comparison, then, between one religious or irreligious belief and another, made from ordinary superficial statistics, is not fair till these causes of difference are removed or due allowance made for them. Men, like things, otherwise similar must be taken for comparison, if we are going to ascertain the effect of some particular disparity, as that of religion, now in question.

And it must be remembered that it is not our fault that the Catholics of this country have, as a rule, hitherto occupied a lower position with regard to these worldly gifts than their fellow-citizens. Those of them from whom you mostly draw your conclusions have been deprived

of these advantages, and deprived of them, not by their religion but on account of their religion. England has for centuries taken from them the necessary means of acquiring wealth and knowledge, except on the condition that they would renounce their faith ; this is simply history, and an unspeakably disgraceful page of it. Englishmen, and the descendants of Englishmen, ought to be ashamed to speak of persecution, after this crushing of the minds and bodies of a whole nation for hundreds of years. And yet some of them would continue the same work here.

To resume. We are anxious that Catholics should acquire the same advantages as others, provided that they do not set their hearts more on the wisdom and goods of this world than on those which are from above ; and we are making up the difference, as you cannot fail to see, as fast as you will let us.

The fairest comparison which can now be made between the effects of the Catholic religion and the various Protestant forms of Christianity, would be that between those who carry out in their lives their respective precepts. We are not at all afraid to put the conduct of practical Catholics, who approach the sacraments regularly, against that of any other church-members.

The general question, however, of the relative morality of Catholic and Protestant coun-

tries all over the world, in which the differences of which I have spoken are of course to some extent removed, is, no doubt, of great interest, and the results, when thoroughly treated, may somewhat surprise you. Books have been written on this subject, which is too extensive to be treated here ; one quite lately, and now easily obtainable, by Rev. A. Young, C.S.P., under the title *Catholic and Protestant Countries compared*.

But do not forget for a moment that we by no means claim that because a man is a Catholic, he is *necessarily* better than one who is not. So far is this from being the case, that bad Catholics who live regardless of the laws and the morality of the Church may easily be, and often are, worse than if they did not belong to it. There is a Latin proverb, "*Corruptio optimi pessima*"; which means, "The corruption of what was best is the worst of all corruption." And indeed it is plain, if the Catholic religion is what we claim, that he who sins against it is worse than others, as sinning against the greater light. But this is no reason for our not coming to the light, and following its guidance. "The kingdom of heaven," says our Divine Saviour (v. 45-46 of the chapter of St. Matthew already quoted), "is like a merchant seeking good pearls ; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his

way, and sold all that he had, and bought it." Let us, like him, all the more show our appreciation of that pearl of great price, which others have despised.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CONCLUSION.

I CANNOT well close this book without saying a few words about the attitude of the Church regarding two vices, which it is supposed by some Protestants not merely not to condemn, but even to encourage. And yet it ought hardly to be necessary to do so, as the Catholic teaching concerning them is simply that of reason and common sense.

The vices of which I speak are those of drunkenness and gambling. Let us take them separately, though really the treatment of both of these subjects is much the same.

The Catholic Church, then, does not condemn the drinking of wine or other alcoholic liquors as bad or sinful in itself. It sanctions the use of fermented wine for Mass, in which the priest receives Communion under this form, as has been said. And the common opinion among us, and indeed among Christians generally, is that our Lord partook of such wine also on other occasions, and that its use is approved in

other passages of Holy Scripture. And there seems to be no reason why other similar drinks may not be used as well as wine, reasonable limits being observed.

But the Church has always condemned the excessive or intemperate use of such drinks, and always regarded drunkenness as a mortal sin; and a very grievous and dangerous one too, it being the cause and source of most of the others into which men commonly fall. Moreover, as there are many persons who cannot touch any kind of spirituous drink without going to excess, total abstinence from it is for these many an absolute necessity; for such, even to taste it would be a mortal sin. And the Church has, especially in these times, when the evil has become so rampant, set her face very strongly against the indiscriminate sale of strong drink, and the saloon business generally. She also encourages total abstinence as the best of all mortifications, even for those who do not need it as a safeguard.

With regard to gambling, the state of the question is, as has been said, very similar. To risk money on events determined by what we call chance, is not itself clearly condemned either by reason or the law of God. There is no reason in the nature of things why a contract should not be made, with conditions determined by chance, as well as one with fixed

conditions, if the chances are fair all round, and the stake not so large that some one or more of the parties cannot properly afford to take the risk. Would you object, for instance, to tossing up to see whether you or your friend should undertake some work, which one of you had to do? If not, then you see no harm in the principle of the thing, which is the same throughout. But if this thing, which seems innocent in itself, is prohibited by some positive Divine Law, such law should be proved to exist.

It is with gambling as with drink. It is the excess, and the passion for it, which makes the danger. And no doubt it is a terrible one. Gambling is a strong temptation, a road to ruin, for very many, unquestionably; and the Church easily agrees with the State, when the latter legislates against public lotteries and gaming-houses on this account, as well as on account of the unfairness and cheating often connected with them.

I have now, my dear friends and fellow-countrymen, gone over, as far as space will permit, what seem to be the principal objections likely to exist in your minds against the Catholic Church. I have not, as you will notice, endeavored to prove its doctrines by positive

arguments ; but simply to show that what you value and cherish as your Christian inheritance, it also holds ; and that what it teaches over and above this is not what your imagination, warped by the prejudices and the false traditions handed down from generation to generation, would have it to be. If you wish to know our teaching and our practice more in detail, there is nothing to prevent your knowing them. Our book-stores are full of works on these subjects, from the simplest catechism to the most profound theology ; and in them you may, perhaps, place more confidence than in what I have presented to you here ; for our books, in general, are written for Catholics ; and in them you will hardly expect special pleading, such as you may perhaps look for in a work like this.

Read, then, some at least of these books, written by Catholics for Catholics ; if not in search of conviction, at least for information ; that when you speak or write about what we hold and teach, you may at least do so intelligently. One need not know everything, but it is well to know what one is talking about. There may be, there no doubt are, many subjects in the range of human knowledge about which you need not inform yourselves ; there is not indeed time even for the greatest minds to learn all that is to be learned in this world. But the subject of religion, especially when it is the re-

ligion held by the vast majority of Christians through the world, over three hundred million at least—for the Greek, Russian, and Eastern Churches hold substantially the same faith as we—is too important a one to be lightly passed over, especially when all the information you have hitherto had about it has come from persons having the same prejudices that you have yourselves.

If you hold any special form of Protestant religion, or even if you are merely definitely and decidedly a Protestant, objecting to and protesting against the Catholic Church, the obligation of inquiry is stronger than it would be if you were simply indifferent; though that you cannot reasonably be. For you ought to know, from original information, not as you think you do now, from second-hand authority, what it is that you are protesting against. If you protest against the bad morals which have existed and must necessarily exist in the Church of God, not only among the laity but even to some extent among the clergy themselves, know that we join with you most heartily in these protests, and that all good men in the Church, its authorities, both rulers and teachers especially, are always laboring to reform its moral life and to correct practical abuses. We do not deny that reformation of

this kind in it is always needed ; and it was no doubt particularly needed when Luther set about his self-imposed task. Side by side with him and his followers the Council of Trent, assembled in the name of the Church, was at work carrying out a true reformation, amending discipline and teaching true faith and morals against the prevailing errors of the day.

But if you think that your protest goes farther than this, be sure, as I have said, just precisely what it is and against what it is made. Do not make a protest against some dogma or some rule of morals which the Church never dreamed of maintaining, and against which it would protest as strongly as you.

And even if you find anything, though I hardly think you will, in the real teaching of the Church which seems too difficult to believe, remember, if, as I suppose, you wish to be a Christian, that after all the presumption is in her favor, as the interpreter of what Christ and His apostles really taught ; that is, as to what Christianity really is. Do not at once be sure that you know more about this than the Church which has existed from the beginning, because you are in possession of some writings of the evangelists and apostles which the Church herself preserved for you. She has and accepts all that you have, and more. It is simply a ques-

tion as to which knows most on the subject ; she, with the wisdom of the ages, or you with yours of yesterday ; she with the commission of Christ to teach the world, you with one coming only from yourself. Is it not, to say the least, more likely that the Holy Spirit which rested on the Apostles in the beginning should be with their duly appointed successors than with yourself ? Surely one ought to be careful, and think and pray long and hard, and be sure that he has a special call from God, before undertaking to reform an institution which Christ placed in the world, and with which He promised He would always be.

But as for us, we will not find fault with you in your difficulties ; especially such of us as have been where you now stand. All we ask is that you would be candid and sincere, earnestly desiring to know the truth ; that you will not, for the sake of pride or any worldly consideration, refuse to attend to the plain facts which I have presented specially to you, Americans like myself, and that you will act according to your conscience on the knowledge which you may here or elsewhere obtain. And it should be remembered that this is not a merely speculative subject. To consider it properly, something more is required besides candor and sincerity ; and that is a realization

of the supreme importance of the matter in hand.

The question is simply this : Has Almighty God established in this world a means not only for the preservation of His truth, but also for the pardon and reparation of sin, such as the Catholic Church claims to be? Does he command us, not only to listen to its voice, to be enlightened and instructed by it, but to come to it, to belong to it, and to receive its Sacraments, in order to cleanse our souls from sin, and to conquer in our struggle with temptation?

If you, reader, feel no danger from sin, no need of forgiveness for it, no difficulty in overcoming it, this question may not come home to you. But if, like the rest of us, you do feel the weight of sin upon you, the most important and practical of all questions for you is, "What means has God provided that I may rid myself of it, and keep myself from it? What shall I do to be saved?"

And it is a question which must be asked, not merely of our own reason or common sense but of Him who alone can assure us of the true answer to it. One must turn to God, one must pray, to know with certainty the answer to this most momentous of questions. Do not say, "My father's, or my mother's religion is good

enough for me"; for nothing short of the *truth* is good enough for anybody in this matter. The first thing is to free yourself from prejudice, not to take for granted that you know all about it, to listen to reason; but this done, do something more. Ask God to give you the light to know His will, and the strength to obey it, whatever may be the sacrifice required. Say, as St. Paul did when he began to see that it was God whom he had been opposing, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"



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